

unless God himself chooses to maneuver these forces in accordance with His own plan. Human safety is only found in trust and submission to God. In both of those chapters God declared that He Himself would give protection to Israel, but that He would show the folly of trusting in Egypt.

Thus it is quite appropriate that chapters 18 to 20 should come immediately after 17. There is a progress of thought here.

At the end of the three chapters, we find the following two verses: "And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this isle (better "coastland") shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?" These two verses present the keynote of the whole three chapters. Everything previous illustrates this truth. At the same time, of course, as in all prophecy, additional and related truths are constantly set forth. The word that the King James Version generally renders as "isles" can be equally well rendered "coast." Here it means the coastland that includes Palestine.

Chapter 18

This chapter, which deals exclusively with Ethiopia, has puzzled many readers. If the historical situation is left out of account, many of its verses are obscure and bewildering. Once the historical situation is brought into focus, the chapter becomes entirely clear and gives rich insight into God's ways of dealing with humanity. The chapter may be divided into three sections:

1. Verses 1 to 2a -- description of the people addressed.
2. Verses 2b through 6 -- God's reply to the Ethiopian ambassadors.
3. Verse 7 -- the concluding prediction.

In verse 1 to 2a, a description is given of the people who are discussed in the chapter. We have already seen that these are the people of Ethiopia, the region south of Egypt. This land is here characterized as a land "shadowing with wings." Some prefer the translation "whirring with wings." Perhaps it is a reference to the bright sunlight shimmering