

Why does this gentleman who always has been known for his conservatism go about in this unusual fashion?" Isaiah would answer, "This is the command of God for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia. So shall the king of Assyria lead the Egyptians away prisoners, and the Ethiopians captive, young and old, naked and barefoot ... to the shame of Egypt." Isaiah continued this object lesson for about three years.

We do not know just when this prediction was fulfilled. The Assyrian power lasted another century after Sargon's officer took Ashdod. During this period the Egyptians suffered a number of defeats at the hands of the Assyrians. Two Assyrian kings led armies into Egypt and took great numbers of prisoners away with them. Our passage may not be a specific prediction of one of these conquests, but a declaration of the fact that there will be occasions when the conquering Assyrians will completely overcome the armies of Egypt and Ethiopia.

The last two verses are the conclusion not only of this chapter, but also of the entire section of three chapters. The people of Judah will be ashamed of these two nations to which they have looked for help.

In verse 6 the word "isle" is an unfortunate translation. The Hebrew word simply means coast or region. Isaiah is pointing to the region of Judah as contrasted with that of Egypt. The inhabitant of this area will say, "That is the land to which we looked for help; we thought that Egypt and Ethiopia would be able to help us against Assyria, yet they themselves have been conquered by the Assyrians! How then can we escape?" There is only one way they can escape: it must be through the help of the Lord!

The Lord did prevent the Assyrian from ever conquering all of Judah. It was only after Assyria had been destroyed that the conquerors of Assyria destroyed Judah and took Jerusalem into exile. Until God's time came, no one could injure His people.

Isaiah 21-22: A Series of Four Visions

The passage from 21:1 to 22:14 contains four visions with very striking titles. The first is called "The Burden of the