

“THE LORD RIDES ON A SWIFT CLOUD”

Isaiah 18-23

Introduction

- 1) **God** and **clouds** are often paired together to illustrate God’s divine glory, power, and judgment (Ex. 13:21; 24:15-16; 33:9; Psa. 68:4; 104:1-3; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:9; Rev. 1:7)
- 2) The Lord is pictured as riding on a “swift cloud” in bringing judgment (Isa. 19:1)
 - a) Describes the speed and power of divine judgment when it comes upon the nations

I) The Proclamations against Ethiopia and Egypt (18:1 – 20:6)

- A) Woe to Ethiopia [Cush] – a land shadowed with buzzing wings [insects] (18:1)
 - 1) Sends ambassadors to quickly gather army (18:2)
 - 2) God will deal with Assyria in His time and cut them down (18:3-6)
 - 3) Ethiopians will bring a gift to Mount Zion (18:7; cf. Acts 8:26-39 Ethiopian eunuch)
- B) Lord will come in judgment on Egypt riding “on a swift cloud” (19:1)
 - 1) Civil war and internal strife – will find no help from idols and sorcerers and will be given into the hand of a cruel master (19:2-4)
 - 2) Drought will cause hardship and unemployment (19:5-10)
 - 3) Foolish rulers and counselors of Egypt have led people astray (19:11-15)
- C) “In that day” (six times); Messianic hope to come (19:16-25)
 - 1) Egypt will be made afraid, swear by Lord, make altar and pillar to the Lord, a Savior sent for deliverance, sacrifice and vow to Lord, struck by Lord and return to Lord
 - 2) Egypt, Assyria, and Israel all blessed together by the Lord (Messianic kingdom universal)
- D) Isaiah commanded by God to walk naked and barefoot for three years (20:1-6)
 - 1) Was done on occasion of Assyria’s defeat of the Philistine city of Ashdod (711 BC)
 - 2) A sign against Egypt and Ethiopia that Assyria would lead them away naked and barefoot
 - 3) Those who put their trust in earthly kingdoms will be left with no hope!

II) Proclamations against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia (21:1-17)

- A) “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!” – by means of Elam [Persian] and Media [Medes] (vv. 1-10)
 - 1) Fulfilled in 539 BC (almost 200 years in the future – divine inspiration of prophecy)
- B) Edom [Seir] calls out to the watchman about the night; told to return (vv. 11-12)
- C) Arabia would endure the distress of war and the glory of Kedar will fall (vv. 13-17)

III) Proclamation against Jerusalem (22:1-14)

- A) “Valley of Vision” – prophets and temple in Jerusalem (v. 1)
- B) Trouble and destruction coming because they did not look to and respect their God (v. 11)
- C) God’s call for repentance met with attitude of frivolity and foolishness (vv. 12-13)

IV) Shebna and Eliakim (22:15-25)

- A) Shebna and Eliakim are servants in the house of king Hezekiah (36:3; 37:2)
 - 1) Shebna condemned for his pride and will lose his office
 - 2) Eliakim will take Shebna’s place – faithful leader with the key of the house of David
 - a) Principle of authority in God’s house applied now to Jesus (v. 22; Rev. 3:7)

V) Proclamation against Tyre (23:1-18)

- A) City and harbor of Tyre laid waste according to the purpose of the Lord (vv. 1, 6-9)
- B) Tyre would eventually return to prominence in world trade again (vv. 15-18)

Conclusion

God’s sovereign rule over the nations of men is a clear and undeniable truth of Scripture. The nations of men will face the swift judgment of God if they uphold evil in their pride.