

Title: *“The Apologetics of the Fellow Sufferers”*

Sub-Title: *“The Obscure Prophecy”*

Key Verse of Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Key Verse of Apologetics: I Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

Introduction: As born again Christians each of us are ambassadors in a foreign country, and furthermore each of us as ambassadors for Christ are in hostile territory. One might say that we are stationed at our forward operating base here on Earth, while Heaven is our home base or station.

EXCELLENT WAY MINISTRIES
Knight's Notes # 26: - Dr. Andrew Knight

As ambassadors for Christ we do not choose where our post is, but rather our post is determined and directed by our heavenly Father. There are several things that we can be sure of relative to where we serve as ambassadors. We serve where there is a need; where there is opportunity; we serve where the Lord has provided; and, where the Lord is leading and blessing our representation of Heaven here on Earth.

Defining the Lord's blessing and leading should be addressed here. One might find themselves in prison for their faith, like the Apostle Paul and Silas. While in prison these men sang praises to the Lord as they felt unworthy to suffer for the name of Christ. In other words, they were thankful that they had the privilege to suffer for the name of Christ. This is why they sang and filled the prison with praises to God. This is why they were witnesses for Christ while in prison for their faith. And this is why they knew the prayers of God's people would get them released from prison. Paul and Silas epitomized Jesus Christ and that is why we are still discussing them today, in particular, relative to Isaiah chapter eighteen.

Text: Isaiah 18:1-7 “Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

A. Adam Clarke referred to Isaiah chapter eighteen as being an, “Obscure prophecy...addressed to Jews and Ethiopians.”¹

B. Clarke explained the geography of, “the Rivers of Ethiopia:”

1. Clarke stated, “What are the rivers of Cush? Whether the eastern branches of the lower Nile, the boundary of Egypt toward Arabia, or the parts of the upper Nile towards Ethiopia,”²

Vs. 2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

¹ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. IV – Isaiah to Malachi (New York: Abington Press, 1826), 92.

² *Ibid.*, 92.

A. The phase, “Go, ye swift messengers”

1. Clarke explained, “by the Nile and by their numerous canals, have the means of spreading the report in the most expeditious manner through the whole country.”³

2. Clarke further explained, “By the swift messengers are meant, not any particular persons specially appointed to this office, but any of the usual conveyers of news whatever, travelers, merchants, and the like, the instruments and agents of common fame. These are ordered to publish this declaration made by the world; and to excite their attention to the promised interposition of God.”⁴

³ Ibid., Clarke, 92.

⁴ Ibid., 92.

B. Geography explained, “to a nation scattered”

1. Clarke stated, “Egypt, exclusive of the deserts on each side, is one long vale, through the middle of which runs the Nile, bounded on each side to the east and west by a chain of mountains seven hundred and fifty miles in length; in breadth from one to two or three days journey:”⁵

C. What is meant by, “Trodden down”?

1. “A method of tillage in use among the Egyptians. Both Herodotus, and Diodorus, say that when the Nile had retired within its banks, and the ground became somewhat dry, they sowed their land, and then sent their cattle to tread in the seed; and without any further care expected the harvest.”⁶

⁵ Ibid., Clarke, 92.

⁶ Ibid., 92.

2. The further explanation of the meaning “trodden down,” “This would perfectly well suit with the Nile: whereas nothing can be more discordant than the idea of spoiling and plundering; for to the inundation of the Nile Egypt owned every thing; the fertility of the soil, and the very soil itself. Besides, the overflowing of the Nile came on by gentle degrees, covering without laying waste the country:”⁷

Vs. 3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

A. The Lord is the antecedent which blew the trumpet in this passage.

B. The trumpet announced the battle of the gods.

⁷ Ibid., 93.

Vs. 4 “For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”

A. “Like a clear heart”

B. Job 36:11 “If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.”

C. “in the heat of harvest”

1. In the heat of the toil.

2. An appeal to an agrarian culture.

Vs. 5 “For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.”

A. “the flower: the blossom of the vine.”

B. **Genesis 40:10** “And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:”

Vs. 6 “They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.”

Vs. 7 “In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.”

A. "The present-A gift"

1. Egyptians and Jews were fellow-sufferers.
2. Their common enemy Sennacherib.
3. **II Chronicles 32:23** "And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."
4. "of a people _ From a people"
5. "which is confirmed by the repetition"
6. "the prediction of the admission of Egypt into the true church of God is not so explicit...that event is clearly fortold."⁸

⁸ Ibid., Clarke, 94.

1. **Apologetic argument one:** One must always first begin with the supremacy of Scripture. In other words, every foundational believe and truth claims must begin with the absolute authority of the Word of God. Our truth claims and our worldview are rooted in the Word of God. The Bible is not only authoritative, but is supreme over all other sources of truth claims.

2. **Apologetic argument two:** One must also recognize the reliability of the prophet Isaiah. Every prophecy has a mate. Many of Isaiah's prophecies came to pass during his lifetime, while many others did not come to pass for centuries. This is the source of confidence that every student of the Bible should have that when an Old Testament prophet consistently predicts future events relative to the working of the Lord in the affairs of man, than one can be assured that other prophecies in Isaiah and throughout the rest of the Bible are completely trustworthy thou they have not yet come to pass. One can be assured that every biblical prophecy will come to pass at its appointed time.

3. **Apologetic argument three:** Chapter eighteen revealed that God allowed Egypt (many times referred to as a picture of the world) and Judah (The Hebrews-God's people) to come under persecution. There are two main reasons for God to allow persecution. One to allow the punishment for the wickedness of the unbelievers and for the disobedience of God's people. (All suffering is not because of disobedience). The second purpose that God allows suffering is for His glory. A third reason for this account is that it demonstrates that God is all powerful and He is in control of this universe.
4. **Apologetic argument four:** The historic prophecies seen in the book of Isaiah prove their relevants. The fact that events that took place 714 BC and their account has been preserved over multiple millennia are proof positive of their relevance in the world today. One would be hard pressed to find a volume of any genre or any body of study that pre-dates the life of Christ and is still relevant today.

Applications:

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