

The Prophecies of Isaiah ³⁶

Lesson 14

Isaiah's Presentation Format	<i>Far Prophecy</i> Tall and smooth people from a country beyond Cush rescue Israel from attack and pay homage in Zion.
Chapter 18	Isa. 18

Lord's Homage from People Tall and Smooth – Vision 12

Beyond the Rivers of Cush

Isaiah 18:1 Alas, oh land of whirring wings which lies beyond the rivers of Cush, ² Which sends envoys by the sea, even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation whose land the rivers divide.

Vision 12 refers to the nation of seagoing people, "tall and smooth," that lies beyond the rivers of Cush. It is to be feared throughout the world. However, it is also a land divided by its rivers and marked by something resembling "whirring wings" or wings that produce a clattering sound. Most scholars place the land of Cush south of Egypt as identified in Map 20 and equate her to Ethiopia today. The map is correct; however, the inhabitants of the nations to the west and south, beyond the rivers of Cush, would not be considered "tall and smooth," neither then nor now. The Lord is not addressing the land which Cush settled after the Tower of Babel. He is addressing the land identified near the Garden of Eden and called by that name more than two thousand years before the birth of Cush, Noah's grandson.



Map 20: The Division of the Eighteen Families after the Tower of Babel

³⁶ All Scriptures in this lesson entitled "The Prophecies of Isaiah" are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, Copyright (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Genesis 2 identifies the land of Cush as one of the four areas fed by a river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:¹⁰ Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³ And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Four rivers are fed by the river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden. The last two can be identified with ease. The Tigris and the Euphrates hold the same names today and their headwaters begin in modern-day Turkey. The headwaters of the other two rivers must begin in the same location. The third river is the Pishon which begins in Turkey and flows around the land of Havilah which means sand or sandy. The sandy land of the



Map 21: Four major rivers that begin in the same area

Aram/Syrian/Arabian desert begins in modern-day Syria with the Euphrates to the northeast of the desert and the Pishon or Leontes River to its northwest. The Leontes provides a portion of the water that feeds the Jordan River which ultimately ends at the Dead Sea today, but prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the River ran all the way to the Red Sea, bordered on the west by the sandy desert. The Gihon River is difficult to identify because it is associated with the land of Cush. No river that begins in Turkey travels through the Promised Land, around to Egypt and down the east side of the Nile uphill and downhill all the way to surround the land of Cush/Ethiopia. However, the Hayles River begins in Turkey near the other three and flows west around Pontus, through Galatia and pours into the Black Sea. Beyond the districts of Pontus, Galatia and the Hayles River, all the descendants of Japhath, Lud, and Meshech, “tall and smooth” including Greece live in countries that are riddled with rivers of all sizes. Three hundred and ninety-five years after this prophecy, Alexander the Great will march across the land of the four rivers mentioned and capture for his own empire every inch of land associated with them. Therefore, the land of Cush in this passage must be the area just south of the Black Sea. Alexander the Great and his army will be feared far and wide but he will not be known as an oppressor. Later, in 64 BC, the remnants of his empire will meld into the Roman Empire. According to Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue, when the two legs of the Roman Empire are conquered, each will be formed into ten toes or countries. At the end time, those ten toes will rejoin and form a new and dreaded empire, feared far and wide and known for its power and oppression. The leader of that nation will come against the Lord in Jerusalem, but he will not succeed.

A Standard and a Trumpet

Isaiah 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, as soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see *it*, and as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear *it*.

Israel will be in trouble and attacked when she is not prepared to defend herself. All will see the “standard ... raised on the mountain” and hear the trumpet blast from Israel, calling

for help. The inhabitants of the entire world will hear the blast and see the standard. It will not be missed by anyone.

Time of the Lord's Pruning

Isaiah 18:4 For thus the LORD has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly like dazzling heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." ⁵ For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms and the flower becomes a ripening grape, then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives and remove *and* cut away the spreading branches. ⁶ They will be left together for mountain birds of prey, And for the beasts of the earth; and the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them, and all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.

When will the trumpet blast and the standard be raised above Jerusalem? It will occur when the Lord looks from His dwelling in heaven with disdain, scorching the oppressor with heat and then bringing the rain so the harvest cannot be gathered. He will not come at that time but he will send a nation to help Israel. The attacking nation will be pruned in the spring at harvest time. The Lord will use the nation "tall and smooth" to do the damage but it is the Lord who will call for all the birds and beasts to devour the remains and they will eat from the spring through the summer. Men will wander through the land burying the meatless bones left behind. One hundred years after this vision, the Lord prophesies this event through Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; ² and I shall turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. ³ "And I shall strike your bow from your left hand, and dash down your arrows from your right hand. ⁴ "You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops, and the peoples who are with you; I shall give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. ⁵ "You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord GOD. ⁶ "And I shall send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD. ⁷ "And My holy name I shall make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I shall not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord GOD. "That is the day of which I have spoken. ⁹ "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out, and make fires with the weapons and burn *them*, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears and for seven years they will make fires of them. ¹⁰ "And they will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them, and seize the plunder of those who plundered them," declares the Lord GOD. ¹¹ "And it will come about on that day that I shall give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off the passers-by. So they will bury Gog there with all his multitude, and they will call *it* the valley of Hamon-gog. ¹² "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ "Even all the people of the land will bury *them*; and it will be to their renown *on* the day that I glorify Myself," declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁴ "And they will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. ¹⁵ "And as those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. ¹⁶ "And even *the* name of *the* city will be Hamonah. So they will

cleanse the land." ¹⁷ "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ "You shall eat the flesh of mighty men, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as *though they were* rams, lambs, goats, and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ "So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.

This pruning will occur in the middle of the Tribulation at the Battle of Gog. The people "smooth and tall" will defeat Gog, their leader and his army.

Gift from the People Tall and Smooth

Isaiah 18:7 At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, Even from a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation, Whose land the rivers divide-- To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, *even* Mount Zion.

Three and one-half years before the defeat of Gog, Israel enters into a seven year peace treaty with this feared nation of people "tall and smooth". When Israel calls for help, her ally comes to the rescue, defeating Gog's enemy. At the end of the battle, Israel still trusts the nation whose leader will arrive on his white horse with a bow in his hand. Israel believes he is her friend. The Revelation speaks of this foreign leader.

Revelation 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.

Israel trusts this leader enough to allow him to occupy the Temple in Jerusalem, a dreadful mistake. He will soon break the treaty and establish himself as god in the Holy place of Jerusalem and will establish his kingdom's capital on Mount Zion. One hundred years after this vision to Isaiah, Daniel prophesies the takeover of the Temple.

Daniel 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many (*Israel*) for one week (*seven years*), but in the middle of the week (*3 ½ years*) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (*Parenthesis added for clarity*)

Finally we see the "whirring wings" of the people from beyond the river of Cush, referred to in verse 1 of this chapter. The people "tall and smooth" will allow their leader to desecrate Israel's most holy place with the clattering wing of abominations. It will not be just one transgression against the faith but repeated episodes of godless doings. From heaven the Lord will gaze quietly and with scorn; His time to break through the skies and set up His throne is still three and one-half years away.

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 18	<i>Far Prophecy</i> Tall and smooth people from a country beyond Cush rescue Israel from attack and pay homage in Zion.	Will be fulfilled in the middle of the Tribulation

Figure 31: Fulfillment of Vision 12