

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 17

*Theme: The Burden Of Damascus And Ephraim.*

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## Chapter 17

Damascus was the leading city of Syria, and it still is that today. Many have called it the oldest city in the world. There are, of course, several places that make the same claim. In Greece, the city of Mycenae claims to be the oldest, but there is not much there today except a very good Greek restaurant! By the Jordan there is a sign giving the kilometers to "Jericho, The World's Oldest City." I guess about every country in the world claims to have the oldest city. I have been waiting for my native state of Texas to make the same claim -- I am sure they will dig it up some day. However, Damascus does have a good claim to it. It was Vitranga who wrote, "Damascus has been destroyed oftener than any other town... it rises again from ashes." But "Damascus" in this chapter refers to the entire nation of Syria.

Ephraim is the name of a tribe of Israel, it is the name of a city, it is the name of a mountain, and it is the name of a man. Ephraim is often used in Scripture to refer to the ten northern tribes of Israel. The prophets used it in that way: "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.... Ephraim is joined to idols..." (Hos. 4:16-17).

Therefore, we have here in chapter 17 the burden of Damascus and Ephraim or, in other words, the burden of the nations of Syria and Israel. Because of the confederacy between Syria and Israel (often for the purpose of coming against Judah), Israel is linked with the judgments pronounced on Syria. Partners in crime means partners in judgment.<sup>1</sup>

This oracle deals with Syria (or Aram—Damascus was its capital) and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim being its leading tribe), which had formed an alliance to Judah's north in 735-732 B.C. Even though the oracle is addressed to Damascus, it focuses quickly on Israel (17:4). It is probably a mosaic composition alluding to events that happened over many years of Isaiah's ministry that the prophet pieced together under divine inspiration. As in all these oracles, Isaiah's interest was not primarily in the course of events as such but the issues to which these events gave expression. Israel, as well as the other nations addressed in these oracles, refused to depend on God and trusted in man for protection. That is why they received a heavy message (burden) from the Lord.

"As the Lord organizes history for the good of his people (the Babylon oracle) and purposes to keep the Davidic promises (the Philistia oracle), opening them to the Gentiles also (the Moab oracle), his actions under all these headings are holy and just. Sin is not overlooked [even in Israel, (the Damascus Ephraim oracle)]."<sup>2</sup>

This oracle concerns Damascus, the city which was the capitol of the Arameans, or Syria. The message from God is that they were about to become ruined, removed from being a city. Allied with the Arameans against Judah was Ephraim, the northern kingdom of Israel. Their destiny was the same as Damascus: destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>2</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>1</sup>The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from *being* a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.**

"It shall be a ruinous heap" -- there will be those quick to point out that this has not been fulfilled, inasmuch as the present-day city of Damascus claims to be the same as the original city. As I have said before, there is a far-off fulfillment of all these prophecies and a local or contemporary fulfillment also. There are two possible explanations for the problem presented by this prophecy:

1. Historians are not always accurate in their identification of such things as the locations of ancient cities. One man wrote a profound history not long ago and then made the statement that the biggest liars in the world have been historians. In the area of present-day Damascus there happen to be many ruins of a city, and any one of these ruins could be the original Damascus. Damascus is like a great many of the ancient cities, in that when it was destroyed in one place, they did not always rebuild on the same site but shifted it somewhat to another location. (Other cities, such as the sacred city of Jerusalem, were rebuilt on exactly the same site because of the significance of the location to the people.) We will just leave this problem to the archaeologist who hasn't come up with the answer yet as to which of the ruins is old Damascus.

2. Damascus has withstood the ravages of war throughout history and has never ceased being a city, although it has shifted locations. It probably is the oldest city in the world. It thus far has survived every catastrophe that has come upon the earth, particularly in a land that has seen army after army march through it. But it will not survive during the Great Tribulation period. It will be destroyed; and, as Isaiah says here, it will cease being a city. It will become a ruinous heap. Both of these explanations show the accuracy of the prophecy that Isaiah gives here.<sup>3</sup>

The northern kingdom and Aram made an alliance to fight against Assyria. But Tiglath-pileser III captured Damascus, the capital of Aram, in 732 B.C. and annexed the northern kingdom to the Assyrian Empire. Ahaz, king of Judah, paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 16:1-14).<sup>4</sup>

Damascus was one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, but the coming Assyrian judgment would reduce it to a heap of ruins.

Damascus taken away: The time of this prophecy is set in the last verse of chapter 16 which plainly shows that the timing is contemporary with Isaiah's writing. The events relative to Moab would be within three years of the issuing of the prophecy. So the events of this chapter are imminent to the time of the writing. The same warnings of impending disaster for Israel and Syria-Damascus have been given in chapters 7 and 8. Included here are the regions of Gilead, the area allotted to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh beyond Jordan. This is not the first destruction of Damascus nor will it be the last so the time will be coincident with the other events in the chapter.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>4</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/14-18.htm>

**<sup>2</sup>The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.**

"The cities of Aroer" is a suburban area near Damascus. This entire area would be destroyed. This probably has happened in the past, and it will happen again.

Aroer: is the southern most city on the banks of the Arnon which is the border between Moab-Ammon and the region of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe east of the Jordan. If this is predictive of the devastation of that area and Aroer then the prophecy is dated before the first invasion of Tiglath Pilezer, approximately 735 BC while the fall of Damascus is 731 BC.<sup>6</sup>

**<sup>3</sup>The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.**

The northern kingdom of Israel must bear her share of the burden or judgment of Damascus because of the alliance they have. Both were besieged by Tiglath-pileser, as recorded in 2Kings 15:29, and were finally deported by the Assyrian, Shalmaneser, as recorded in 2Kings 17:6. This certainly was a partial fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy; and, as far as many are concerned, it is the total fulfillment. But I feel that all of this is looking even to a future day. Certainly this has been fulfilled partially at least, but oftentimes in the Word of God we find that God is letting us know, by giving an earlier partial fulfillment, that a prophecy will be completely fulfilled.

In the remainder of this chapter we find that the judgment is going to be carried out. I will not go into much detail here.<sup>7</sup>

Fortress may refer to Samaria, the capital city. Ephraim designates northern Israel. Since Damascus, the capital of Syria, was allied with Ephraim, the oracle of God's judgment was against both nations.

The fortress will also cease from Ephraim: As is often the case, the northern kingdom of Israel is referred to by its dominate tribe, Ephraim. At this time, Israel and Syria were closely aligned against Judah. Since they are such close friends, God will announce His judgment against Ephraim, against Israel, at the same time He speaks to Syria! 2 Kings 15:29; 2Ki\_16:9 describe the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Israel's modern interaction with Syria is interesting, and a potential hot-spot for future conflict. When Syria occupied the Golan Heights, a strategically crucial high plateau above the whole region of Galilee, Israel was under constant threat of invasion and shelling from Syrian placements on the Golan. But when Syria eventually made a full on invasion of Israel from the Golan, Israel miraculously beat them back and captured the Golan Heights. Now, Syria insists that this strategically crucial region is theirs and must be given back. The Israelis are adamant that they will never give back land that belongs to them, and is necessary for their security. In the meantime, Syria fights Israel through terrorism and their support of militia groups in Lebanon.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/14-18.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

The dream of a “Greater Syria,” encompassing Syria, Lebanon, and parts of northern Israel is a powerful influence in the Syrian leadership.<sup>8</sup>

God announced that Damascus and the cities of Syria, plus Samaria (“the fortified city,” v. 3), would soon fall. Assyria destroyed Damascus in 732 B.C. and Samaria in 722 B.C. These cities would lose their sovereignty and glory and would become grazing lands instead of population centers. Nevertheless the almighty God promised that there would be a few people left in Syria, as there would be in Ephraim (cf. 18:7).<sup>9</sup>

**<sup>4</sup>And in that day it shall come to pass, *that* the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.**

Twofold calamity of Ephraim (or Jacob):

1. Jacob was to be made thin and feeble like a human body wasted away by disease.
2. Like that of a harvest when all the fruits are gathered except a few in the upper branches, or like a few stalks of wheat left standing after the harvest (Isa. 17:5-6).<sup>10</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.**

[**with his arm**] This refers to the custom of gathering a handful of wheat stalks in one hand and cutting them with a sickle in the other.

[**the valley of Rephaim**] The valley of giants southwest of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

**harvests:** The nation of Syria would be “harvested” of its people. The word Rephaim is the Hebrew word for “shades” or “ghosts.” Thus the Valley of Rephaim is the Valley of Death.

**<sup>6</sup>Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two *or* three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four *or* five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.**

The remnant of Syria and Ephraim was to be small after their destruction by the Assyrians. This is pictured by only a few grapes left, and a few olives in the uppermost branches after the harvest.<sup>12</sup>

A remnant would be left (10:20) even though it would be pitifully small.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-17.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>11</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>12</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

**Gleaning Grapes:** There is much evidence to show that the captivity of the tribes of Israel was not just as the hyperbolic conclusions that are often reached, of a complete removal of every person and every city into the mountains of Media. Although most of the tribes were carried off and their political descriptions became extinct there were still individuals and even towns which persisted in the land after the removal by the Assyrians. There was a remnant who maintained their personal tribal identity but the tribe as a political unit ceased to exist. 2 Chron 34:6 speaks of a revival in the days of Josiah, long after the fall of Samaria in "cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali." 2 Chron 34:9 records that when the Temple was repaired during Josiah's reign "the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin;" Thus there was a remnant still in the land after the fall of Samaria and the captivity of the northern tribes but they no longer had any political form. Isaiah, in verse 6 in this chapter, describes just such a remnant surviving the holocaust of the Assyrians as "gleaning grapes" or a few berries left on a bush or a few olives left after the harvesters passed.<sup>13</sup>

Isaiah revealed the reason for this defeat. In the day of God's judgment (cf. vv. 7, 9), Jacob's prosperity would become lean, as when one grows old and loses his former strength, because of her unbelief: her lack of trust in God. She would experience a thorough reaping of her population, as reapers harvested abundant grain crops in the productive valley of Rephaim ("Shades" or "Ghosts," hence "Death") near Jerusalem. Yet a remnant would survive, like the few olives or fruits left after a harvest for gleaners to collect. This is what Yahweh, the God who had pledged Himself to Israel, declared.

"Judah need not fear her neighbors; it is God with whom she should come to terms."<sup>14</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.**

At that day... Second Coming. A near fulfillment in Sennacherib's approaching invasion, but vv. 12-14 look forward to the final invasion and battle at Armageddon, et al.<sup>15</sup>

This shows the desired effect on the remnant of men left after the Assyrian destruction of Syria and Ephraim. It would cause them to recognize that the judgment was just and sent by God. They would look to Him as their source of help instead of idol gods and superstitions (Isa. 17:7-8).<sup>16</sup>

**17:7-11** God's message to Damascus was that it would be completely destroyed. The Arameans had turned from the God who could save them, depending instead on their idols and their own strength. No matter how successful they were, God's judgment was sure. Often we depend on the trappings of success (expensive cars, pastimes, clothes, homes) to give us fulfillment. But God says we will reap grief and pain if we have depended on temporal things to give us eternal

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/14-18.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Chuck Missler Notes, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

<sup>16</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

security. If we don't want the same treatment Damascus received, we must turn from these false allurements and trust in God.<sup>17</sup>

The verb translated look means “to look with interest” or “to look with favor.” Holy One: For a similar idea, see 6:3.

In the midst of such severe judgment, some will respond as they should, with humble respect for God.

The coming destruction would result in the Israelites and the Arameans (Syrians) turning to their maker, the Holy One of Israel, in trust and away from idols.

**<sup>8</sup>And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect *that* which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.**

Four things men will not look to:

1. Their many altars to idols
2. Any man-made deity or shrine
3. Groves (see 'Asherah)
4. Images (Hebrew: chamman (HSN-<H2553>), sun-pillar, an image by which the sun was worshiped, Isa. 17:8; 21:9; 30:22; 41:29; 42:8,17)<sup>18</sup>

Asherim. Wooden pillars representing the female goddess Asherah in Canaanite religion.

The Asherah poles were images of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess who was the female consort of Baal. Queen Jezebel may have brought the worship of Asherah into the northern kingdom. The cult encouraged immoral sexual practices and attracted many people. The Bible warns against worshipping Asherah poles (Deuteronomy 12:3; 16:21), and Manasseh was condemned for putting up an Asherah pole in the Temple (2 Kings 21:7).

Asherah poles are no problem in our world, but a religion based on sexuality is. Pornography has become an addiction for many people. Media and entertainment industries feed our society's obsession with sex. The runaway desire for stimulation and gratification often comes from an empty, lonely heart. God offers real joy and lasting love. Be on the alert for how sexual images divert us from God.<sup>19</sup>

Altars refers to pagan worship. work of his hands: For similar wording, see 2:8; 31:7. Asherah was represented by wooden images (27:9), which were part of the sexual cults of Baal worship among the Canaanite peoples.

One of God's purposes in judgment is to turn our focus away from our idols and the things we have trusted in instead of Him. This speaks of this purpose being fulfilled.

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<sup>17</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>18</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>19</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**<sup>9</sup>In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.**

vv. 9-11: Josephus: Trees on Mt. Olives and Mt. Scopus cut down by Titus during siege of 70 A.D. During Turkish misrule, land was denuded of trees. Ottoman taxed trees. Restoration began by British and intensified by returning Jews. The land only yielded to the Jews...<sup>20</sup>

[In that day] This is one of the few places where "in that day" does not apply to the Millennium. It refers to the day in which the Assyrians were to fulfill this prophecy by destroying Syria and Ephraim.

[his strong cities] The strong cities of both Syria and Ephraim were destroyed by the Assyrians, mainly because of the sins of Israel.<sup>21</sup>

His strong cities will be as a forsaken bough: In judgment, God would strip away from Israel every wrong thing they might have trusted in - pagan altars, wooden images, incense altars, and even their strong cities would give no protection. Their only hope was in the LORD.

“When the Israelites came into the land of Canaan many years before, the strong cities of the land were abandoned to them . . . However, the situation has changed, and the same cities will be abandoned by the Israelites themselves as they are under the judging hand of God.” (Grogan)<sup>22</sup>

**<sup>10</sup>Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:**

Three general sins causing judgment:

1. You have forgotten God.
2. Neglected salvation.
3. Not been mindful that true help and protection come from God.

[rock of thy strength] God and Christ were the great Rocks of Israel.

[shalt thou plant pleasant plants] You will set out plants and hope for a good crop, but you will be disappointed because of the invader taking it; you will have grief and sorrow (Isa. 17:10-11).

[strange slips] That is, choice plants from afar.<sup>23</sup>

Isaiah is talking to the northern kingdom of Israel, and what he says has been literally fulfilled. It has its spiritual application also, as all of this does. The land of Israel in our day has been planted with pleasant plants and slips. I had the privilege personally of setting out five trees in Israel. The forests of the cedars of Lebanon have almost been removed, but there are many trees in that land. The Mount of Olives was covered with trees, but while the Turks controlled Palestine, practically all the land was denuded of its greenery. After World War I England began a movement to plant

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<sup>20</sup> Chuck Missler Notes, khouse.org

<sup>21</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-17.html>

<sup>23</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

trees in that land, and the present government of Israel has continued this policy, so that literally millions of trees have been set out.<sup>24</sup>

You refers to the northern kingdom. forgotten: For background, see Deut. 8:11–20. The people had committed the very sin that God warned them not to: they had forgotten the God who had saved them from slavery. The language recalls the first Exodus; the Lord is called the God of your salvation and the Rock (compare Ex. 15:2; Deut. 32:4).

Why did the LORD bring this judgment on Israel? Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation. In one way, this does not seem like a “great” sin. After all, why does God need us to remember Him? Why can’t we just leave Him alone, and He leave us alone? It is a sin to forget the God of your salvation because He created you, and because He is the God of your salvation. If you forget Him, you can forget about your salvation.

Satan does not need to make us bank robbers or murderers to destroy us. It is quite enough to simply make us forget. We can forget because of sleepiness, we can forget because of a lack of attention, we can forget because we are distracted. Satan doesn’t care much about how he does it, but he does want us to forget the God of our salvation.

“We are thus reminded that we ought not to be so impatient in enduring chastisements, which cure us of the fearfully dangerous disease of apostasy.” (Calvin)<sup>25</sup>

You will plant pleasant plants . . . you will make your seed to flourish; but the harvest will be a heap of ruins. One aspect of the LORD’s judgment against Israel will be to bring their hard work to nothing. They will work hard to plant and grow crops (both literally and figuratively), but the harvest will be a heap of ruins.

This can be one of the most devastating aspects of the LORD’s judgment. Haggai 1:6 speaks of this work of the LORD: You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes. How much better it is to be listening to Jesus, and to have our service directed and blessed by Him (Luke 5:1-10).<sup>26</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: *but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.***

Make your plant to grow may allude to the ancient practice of force-blooming potted plants and allowing them to die. Pagans believed that this reenactment of the life cycle would secure fertile fields. But even after performing this rite, the harvest would be in ruin. Just as the choice vines of the Lord’s vineyard disappointed Him (5:1–7), so His errant people would find their harvest hopes shattered.

The land would be a desolation because the Israelites forgot their God and tried to supply their own needs independent of Him. The description of cultivating plants in these verses represents a pagan custom designed to secure the favor of local gods. Rather than trusting in their saving

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<sup>24</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-17.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-17.html>

God, the Israelites had planted little seedlings of faith in idols. The Israelites' horticultural attempts had been frustrating, as had their attempts to produce satisfaction in life and divine help by pursuing other gods. "What kind of a gardener is he who plants thistles and expects roses! Folly is Israel's action; she turns to the idols and expects protection."<sup>27</sup>

**<sup>12</sup>Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!**

Cf. Isa 57:20, 21. Note use of "many waters" in Isa 17:12, 13; Rev 17:1, 15.

Verses 12-14 have a latter-day fulfillment because:

1. The picture is of the gathering of many nations against Israel (Isa. 17:12-13).
2. It will be when God will rebuke them and fight for Israel (Isa. 17:13). This couldn't be the time of judgment on Israel, spoken of in previous verses, for this is God's judgment on the nations gathered against Israel (Ezek. 38 -- Ezek. 39; Joel 3; Zech. 14; Rev. 19).
3. The mighty armies of the nations will flee like chaff before a whirlwind, as also predicted in Isa. 13:14.
4. The day Christ comes to earth during Armageddon is the only time in the future when the night will be as bright as day to give enough time to destroy the great armies gathered against Jerusalem and the Jews. The whole night will be like it was in Joshua's long day (Josh. 10:13-14). Zechariah plainly predicts that it will become light at evening (Zech. 14:1-8). Here it reveals how long this light will last -- a full night, for by morning the fleeing armies will be destroyed. Such will be the judgment or "portion of them that spoil us (Israel)" (Isa. 17:14).<sup>28</sup>

Many people refers to the nations that plunder Israel (v. 14). Seas and mighty waters speak of chaos and death (8:7; Ps. 46:3).

Woe to the Multitude: The description of things that will happen to those who assault the nation which is the "apple of His eye" is spoken of in general terms here, relating to any enemy. But the description here of the appearance of the enemies and the things that God determines against those enemies of Israel are specific in each of the separate unnamed cases. One such specific case which is named is revealed in an announcement to the Ethiopians in the next chapter.<sup>29</sup>

**<sup>13</sup>The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.**

[**rolling thing**] Hebrew: galgal, a wheel; a whirlwind; a rolling thing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/14-18.htm>

<sup>30</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

Chaff, which lacks life, value, and stability, was threshed and winnowed on windy mountains or hilltops. When God judges the unrelenting, roaring seas—the nations that plundered God’s people—they will become mere tumbleweed rolling before the whirlwind of God’s judgment.

The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters: God will use other nations to bring judgment against Syria and Israel. They will come against them like a flash flood that can’t be stopped.

When God brings the rush of nations against Israel, it doesn’t mean that the nations He uses to judge will be walking right with Him and exempt from judgment. Instead, God will rebuke them and they will flee far away. God can use one sinner to judge another, and then judge the sinner He just used!

This is a comforting principle: Even in the midst of judgment, God shows mercy. As bad as it was going to be for Israel, it could have been worse. Instead, God will allow it for a time, then He would rebuke those attacking Israel. Israel was not at the mercy of circumstances or their enemies; they were at the mercy of God.<sup>31</sup>

**<sup>14</sup>And behold at eveningtide trouble; *and* before the morning he *is* not. This *is* the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.**

Sennacherib’s army would be destroyed between eventide and morning (37:36–38). us: Isaiah identifies himself with his plundered people.

..and before the morning it is not: " behold at eveningtide trouble" In the chapter that follows this image is precise. The enemies of God's people will disappear. The enemies of God's people are present in the evening but "before the morning it is not." This is true. However it is often necessary to wait patiently for the evening before the fateful morning.<sup>32</sup>

Many warriors would descend on Israel like the waves of the sea, but they would quickly dissipate because the Lord would rebuke them. They would disappear like dust before a strong wind. The terror that would be so strong would vanish overnight. God also gave such a deliverance to Judah when Sennacherib the Assyrian attacked Jerusalem (cf. 37:36), but that is not in view here. The fact that Isaiah did not mention a particular nation as the enemy, suggests that he had more in mind than just one foe, and a perspective that extended far beyond his own day. Many nations would punish Israel over the years.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-17.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/14-18.htm>

<sup>33</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**Fifteen Predictions -- Fulfilled:**

1. Damascus will be destroyed (Isa. 17:1).
2. It shall be a ruinous heap.
3. The cities of Aroer will be forsaken (Isa. 17:2).
4. They shall be shelters for flocks.
5. There will not be enough men left to drive them away.
6. The fortress of Ephraim shall cease (Isa. 17:3).
7. The kingdom of Syria shall cease from Damascus.
8. The remnant of Syria shall cease.
9. They shall depart as the glory did from Israel.
10. The glory of Jacob shall be made thin -- diminished (Isa. 17:4).
11. Jacob shall wax lean in body.
12. The riches of Damascus will be taken away by the invaders like the harvesters gather the wheat, grapes, olives, and other crops (Isa. 17:5).
13. Not much will be left -- it will be like a few olives left on branches hard to reach (Isa. 17:6).
14. The few people who are left will recognize that the judgment is from God, and they will look to Him instead of idols (Isa. 17:7-8).
15. Strong cities shall become desolate because of their alliance with Israel who is the object of God's wrath because of sin (Isa. 17:9-10).<sup>34</sup>

**Six Predictions -- Unfulfilled:**

1. Many nations shall be mobilized against Israel (Isa. 17:12-13).
2. God shall rebuke them (Isa. 17:13).
3. They shall flee afar off.
4. They shall be chased as chaff that flies before the wind, and like a rolling thing carried about in a wind.
5. They shall not flee and escape in the darkness of the night, for at evening time there shall be light as in the day, so that their destroyers will see to slay them (Isa. 17:14; Zech. 14:5-7).
6. The night shall be as light as day and they will be destroyed by the time morning breaks (Isa. 17:14; Zech. 14:1-7).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

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