

## ISAIAH – Chapter 18

### Cush or the Cushites

1) A Black people group mentioned 54 times in Scripture. They were a continuous civilization that stood as one of the major powers in the ancient Near East for over 2500 years. Ancient references and paintings supports the fact that these people are Negroes.

2) The Greeks later called every black people group south of Egypt “Ethiopian” (the burnt faces). The Septuagint translated the term “Cush” as “Ethiopia” in keeping with the Greek understanding of the day in which the translation was made.

Note: The Romans called them “Nubians.”

3) The most important commodity in Cush was gold – “the general gold mine of the ancient world.” Due to this fact, the Egyptians of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> dynasties (2160-2040 B.C.) conducted military campaigns into Cush. As a result, the Cushites began appearing in other areas of Egyptian society including the pharaoh’s royal households.

By the end of the Middle Kingdom (about 1800 B.C.), Cush was largely under Egyptian control (virtually a part of Egypt). This fact will influence the time period of Moses and the Exodus.

4) As Egypt weakened, the strength of Cush began to rise.

In 720 B.C., the Cushite king (Piye) led the first successful invasion of Egypt in over 1000 years. Cush lost control over Egypt in 663 B.C. when the Assyrians completely destroyed the city of Thebes (Nahum 3:8-10, No-amon-Thebes), the capital of Upper Egypt. From this time forward, Cush was never able to exert control over Egypt again.

5) Biblical references:

a) Genesis 2:10-14 and 10:6-12

1) Gen. 2:13, Gihon flowed around the whole land of Cush – pre-Noahic flood!!

2) Gen. 10:6, Cush was a son of Ham – Cush was black!

Incident of Gen. 9:18-27 – the theory surrounding where the black race came from. Why Canaan and the curse? The curse is not on the Hamites, but on the Canaanites!

3) Gen. 10:8-12, also states that Cush was the father of Nimrod, who founded the Mesopotamian civilization.

b) Numbers 12:1-16

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he married a Cushite. As a result of the conflict, Miriam was judged and Moses was reaffirmed. Does this mean that Moses' family objected to this interracial marriage, but God approved, vs. 3-15?

c) 2 Sam. 18:19-33

After the defeat of Absalom's army, Joab chose a Cushite to take the news of Absalom's death to David, vs. 20-21.

d) 2 Chron. 14:9-15

War between Asa and the Cushites.

e) 2 Chron. 12:1-3

The Cushites were mercenaries for the Egyptians.

f) Jeremiah 13:23

Some things in life are unchangeable – the sinful behavior of Judah was so habitual that it had become unchangeable like skin color!

g) Jeremiah chap. 38-39

1) Jeremiah delivered the message from God to Judah, 38:1-3.

2) The king and his officials didn't like what they were being told (38:4), so they took Jeremiah and threw him into a well to die, 38:5-6.

3) A Cushite (Ethiopian), an official in the king's palace, rescued Jeremiah, 38:7-13 (Cushites held places of high honor in Judah).

4) The rest of the story, 38:14-39:14.

5) Ebed-Melech, the Cushite, is blessed by God because he believed in the God of Israel when there was "no one left" in Judah who did, 39:15-18.

h) Isaiah 11:11; 45:14-25; Zeph. 3:9-10

The Cushites will be present in the gathering of the nations for the kingdom age.

i) Acts 8:26-40

A Cushite who had come to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel.

Note: Cush is synonymous with Sudan, not Ethiopia.

Vs. 1 Modern Sudan, south of Egypt.

Alas, (Woe) oh land of...this word is an interjection of distress or of a threat voiced in the face of coming disaster. The word occurs 22 times in the book of Isaiah, more than any other prophetic book of the Bible. (Woe or alas)

Whirring wings may refer to locusts.

lies beyond the river – Cush was divided up by branches of the Nile. Isa. 18:7

Vs. 2 Envoys who travel in papyrus vessels. Job. 9:26

a people who were tall (fearsome) and smooth. Isa. 18:7

a people feared.

a powerful and oppressive nation.

Vs. 3 “All the people of the world” (represented in the Cushites) should wait upon the Lord.

Historically the Cushites had established themselves in Egypt by 714 B.C. Assyria was a problem for all the peoples of the land. God through the prophet Isaiah warns the Cushites not to involve themselves in opposition to Assyria. When the time comes, and was coming soon, the world will see “the standard raised” and “hear the trumpet sound,” Assyria will fall!

Vs. 4-6 God has told Isaiah.

I will look from my dwelling place quietly (God from heaven or Isaiah from earth?) What will He see?

- 1) God’s plan for dealing with Assyria will be just like the summer heat and harvest dew. You sit around and watch it wondering if that which follows it will ever come! Why the delay? When God has finished using Assyria to deal with Israel (10 nations) [Isa. 10:12, 25, 28-32], He will stop her and destroy her.
- 2) God will cut them off just when they, like grapes, were beginning to ripen (to extend their empire).
- 3) They will be left on the mountains as food for wild birds in the summer and wild animals in the harvest time.

Vs. 7 After the Lord completes His work (at the time of the destruction of Assyria or possibly at the time of the millennium), The Cushites will bring their offerings to the God of Israel in Jerusalem. Zech. 14:16 Will they not come thank “their God” for how He spared them?

Note: God’s message to the Cushites is not an oracle. He will spare them from going up against Assyria.

God’s oracle concerning Egypt – Isaiah 19:1-20:6 (Cush is included in chapter 20).