

Isaiah 20:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

Analysis

'At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.' God commands shocking sign-act: Isaiah walks naked (likely meaning stripped to loincloth, not fully nude) and barefoot. Prophets performed symbolic acts to communicate divine messages (Jeremiah's yoke, Ezekiel's siege model). This dramatic action captured attention and embodied coming judgment. 'Naked and barefoot' represented prisoners of war stripped and humiliated during deportation—exactly what would happen to Egyptians and Ethiopians. The phrase 'he did so' emphasizes Isaiah's obedience despite personal cost—prophetic ministry required personal sacrifice for faithful message delivery. Reformed ministry theology emphasizes faithfulness to divine call regardless of personal discomfort or reputational cost.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern warfare routinely humiliated captives by stripping clothing and forcing barefoot marching to deportation sites—depicted in Assyrian palace reliefs showing naked bound captives. This wasn't unique cruelty but standard practice to degrade enemies and discourage resistance. Isaiah embodying this condition for three years would have been extremely provocative—religious

teacher walking around Jerusalem nearly naked, subject to mockery and misunderstanding. This demonstrates prophetic courage—willingness to appear foolish for faithful message delivery. The sign-act communicated viscerally what verbal prophecy might not: the horrific reality awaiting those who trusted Egypt. Such radical obedience characterized true prophets versus comfortable false prophets promising easy messages.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does Isaiah's willingness to appear foolish teach about faithfulness to prophetic calling?
2. How do symbolic acts communicate truths differently than mere words?
3. Why does prophetic ministry sometimes require personal sacrifice and humiliation?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵת	בְּעֵת	יְהִי	דָּבָר	יְהִי	בְּיַד	יְשַׁעַת	בְּנֵי	יְשַׁעַת	בְּנֵי
At the same time	H1931	spake	the LORD	by	Isaiah	the son			
H6256		H1696	H3068	H3027	H3470	H1121			
אַמְוֹץ	לִאמְרָה	בָּל	נִפְתְּחָת	בְּשִׂקְעָה	מִעַל	מִתְנַעַן	בְּנֵי	מִעַל	מִתְנַעַן
of Amoz	saying	walking	and loose	the sackcloth	H5921	from off thy loins			
H531	H559	H1980	H6605	H8242	H4975				
וַיַּעֲלֵב	זֶה	מִתְמַלֵּא	בְּגַלְגָּל	וַיַּעֲשֵׂה	כִּי	בָּל	בְּנֵי	וְיַעֲשֵׂה	וְיַעֲשֵׂה
thy shoe	and put off	H5921	from thy foot	And he did so	H3651	walking			
H5275	H2502		H7272	H6213	H1980				
וְעַר	וְעַר	וְעַר							
naked	and barefoot								
H6174	H3182								

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 3:4 (Parallel theme): And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

1 Samuel 19:24 (Parallel theme): And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

Micah 1:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.

Zechariah 13:4 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

Ezekiel 24:17 (Parallel theme): Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

Ezekiel 24:23 (Parallel theme): And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.

Isaiah 13:1 (Parallel theme): The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

Micah 1:11 (Parallel theme): Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy shame naked: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel; he shall receive of you his standing.

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