

Isaiah 20:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

Analysis

'And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?' The 'isle' (Hebrew 'iy—coastland/region) likely refers to Judah/Palestine from Assyrian perspective. Inhabitants will lament: 'This is what came of our expectation'—our hoped-for help proved useless. The rhetorical question 'how shall we escape?' expresses despair when trusted security fails. This demonstrates the tragedy of misplaced trust—not just disappointment but existential threat. The verse captures the devastating realization that comes when false refuges fail and genuine danger remains. This should drive people to the only true refuge: God Himself. The implied answer to 'how shall we escape?' is: only through trusting the LORD, not human alliances. Reformed soteriology emphasizes this principle: apart from divine grace, there is no escape from divine judgment.

Historical Context

This captured the exact situation of 701 BCE: Judean cities fell to Assyria, Egyptian help failed, people realized their trusted security was empty, and cried out in despair. Yet those who trusted God DID escape—Jerusalem was miraculously delivered when God destroyed the Assyrian army (Isaiah 37:36). The answer to 'how shall we escape?' was demonstrated: only through trusting God's promises. This validated Isaiah's consistent message throughout his ministry: political alliances provide false security; genuine security lies only in covenant faithfulness

to God. Church history shows the same pattern: believers trusting God's promises experience deliverance (often miraculous), while those trusting human securities experience repeated disappointment. The lesson endures: trust God alone; all other refuges fail.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the despairing question 'how shall we escape?' teach about failure of false securities?
2. How did the 701 BCE deliverance answer the question by demonstrating divine help's sufficiency?
3. Why must false refuges fail before people genuinely turn to the true Refuge?

Interlinear Text

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|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------|
| וְאָמַר | וְיֹשֵׁב | הָאֵל | הַיּוֹם | בַּיּוֹם | הַהוּא | הַיּוֹם |
| shall say | And the inhabitant | of this isle | H2088 | in that day | H1931 | H2009 |
| H559 | H3427 | H339 | | H3117 | | |
| כֹּה | מִבְּטָחוֹ | אֲשֶׁר | נִסְנוּ | שָׁמָּה | לְעֹזֵרָה | |
| Behold such | is our expectation | H834 | whither we flee | H8033 | for help | |
| H3541 | H4007 | | H5127 | | H5833 | |
| לְהִנָּצֵל | מִפְּנֵי | מֶלֶךְ | אֲשֶׁר | וְאֵיךְ | וְכַדְּמָה | |
| to be delivered | from | the king | of Assyria | H349 | and how shall we escape | |
| H5337 | H6440 | H4428 | H804 | | H4422 | |
| וְאֵיךְ וְכַדְּמָה | | | | | | |
| H587 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:3 (Parallel theme): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Matthew 23:33 (Parallel theme): Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

1 Thessalonians 5:3 (Parallel theme): For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

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