> *Isaiah 7:17-19 (ESV)*
> *17 “The Lord will bring upon you, upon your people, and upon your father’s house, days that have not yet come—since the day Ephraim departed from Judah—namely, the king of Assyria.*
> *18 In that day the Lord will whistle for the* flies in the farthest parts of the Nile of Egypt *and for the* bees in the land of Assyria.
> *19 They will come and settle in the valleys, in the clefts of the rocks, on all thornbushes, and on all the pastures.”*

This passage is part of a prophecy delivered by God through Isaiah to King Ahaz of Judah. It serves as a warning: seeking help from foreign powers rather than trusting God leads to judgment and suffering.

Historical Context

King Ahaz faced an immediate threat from two neighboring nations, Israel (Ephraim) and Aram (Syria), who had allied against him (Isaiah 7:1-2). Rather than turning to God for deliverance, Ahaz sought assistance from Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria (2

Kings 16:7-9, NIV).

While Assyria temporarily defeated Aram and Israel, the long-term consequences for Judah were disastrous. Judah became a vassal state, compelled to adopt Assyrian religious and political practices (2 Kings 16:10-18), including idolatry, which provoked God’s wrath (2 Chronicles 28:2-4).

Symbolism of Flies and Bees

Flies of Egypt:

- The flies recall the plagues of Egypt during the Exodus (Exodus 8:20-24, NIV), which were instruments of divine judgment.

- In this prophecy, the flies represent small but relentless forces that bring corruption, nuisance, and destruction, symbolic of God’s judgment coming upon Judah.

Bees of Assyria:

- Bees are aggressive, highly organized, and capable of inflicting painful stings (Deuteronomy 1:44, NIV).

- The bees represent the Assyrian armies—discipline by a foreign power that brings painful consequences greater than that of the flies, highlighting the severity of judgment when God's people trust in human power instead of Him.

Theological Insights

1. *Trust in God Alone:*

    - *Ahaz's failure illustrates a timeless principle: relying on human strength rather than divine power invites judgment.*

    - *Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV) reminds us:* "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in

all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

2. *Temporary Solutions vs. Eternal Guidance:*

   - *Ahaz gained short-term relief through Assyria (the defeat of Israel and Aram), but it led to long-term subjugation and idolatry.*

   - *Isaiah 31:1 (ESV) warns:* "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord."

3. *Divine Judgment as Correction:*

   - *The imagery of flies and bees shows that God uses instruments of judgment to discipline His people when they forsake Him.*

> ◦ *This is consistent with Hebrews 12:6 (NIV):* “Because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

Fulfillment and Application

Historically, God’s warning came true: Judah eventually became a vassal of Assyria and later fell to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, experiencing painful exile (2 Kings 24-25). This fulfills the imagery of bees delivering painful stings—a metaphor for divine discipline executed through human instruments.

Lesson for Today:

- God calls us to trust Him in all circumstances, not in human power, wealth, or alliances.

- Like Ahaz, turning from God to seek worldly solutions leads to temporary relief but long-term hardship.

- Faithful dependence on God brings true security, protection, and spiritual flourishing.

Conclusion:
The “flies of Egypt” and “bees of Assyria” are powerful symbols of God’s sovereignty, judgment, and discipline. They remind us that God alone is the ultimate refuge. We are called to trust Him, submit to His guidance, and avoid the temptation of self-reliance or reliance on worldly powers.

Maranatha.

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