
Isaiah 19

Egypt, upon whom Israel had placed her trust, would fall. Eventually, Egypt would discover the true Gospel and worship the Lord, along with Assyria and other nations who would join Israel in worshipping the one and true Living God. There are a number of different explanations given by one or another of the exegetes of exactly how Egypt was brought down to her knees: outside forces, inside civil wars, despots who will lead the nation, and even the Lord Himself.

vv. 1–17. Egypt would become a broken reed upon which Judah could lean upon only to her hurt (ISAIAH 36:6). Isaiah and Jeremiah often accused Judah of yielding to her desire to trust on the arm of Egypt rather than upon the Lord. The day would come when the children of Jacob would stay on the Lord (ISAIAH 10:20).

1 ¶ THE burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

THE burden of Egypt מִשְׁאָ מִצְרַיִם. The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “The burden of the cup of cursing to make the Egyptians to drink.” The Syriac (Ⓢ) renders it, “The prophecy concerning the fall of Egypt.” Calvin well observes, “The Prophet here prophesies against *Egypt*, because it was a kind of refuge to the Jews, whenever they saw any danger approaching them; for when they had forsaken God, to whom they ought to have had recourse, they thought that they had no help left to them but in the Egyptians . . . because when they ought to have relied on God alone, they were puffed up with that vain confidence in Egypt.” Regarding Egypt we read in Barnes, “The word ‘Egypt’ in the original is מִצְרַיִם; and it was so called after Mizraim the second son of Ham, and grandson of Noah. Sometimes it is called Mazar (2 Kings 19:24; ISAIAH 19:6; ISAIAH 37:25; Micah 7:12).” ¶ *Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt.* This is a metaphoric expression of God’s power, that while men might have ridden upon swift horses, the Lord, in contrast, could ride the swift or speedy clouds. Delitzsch has, “Jehovah rides upon clouds when He is about to reveal Himself in His judicial majesty (Psalm 18:11); and in this instance He rides upon a light cloud, because it will take place rapidly. The word *kal* [קל] signifies both *light* and *swift*, because what is light moves swiftly; and even a light cloud, which is light because it is thin, is

comparatively עב, i.e., literally *dense, opaque, or obscure.*” ¶ *And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.* The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “And the idols of the Egyptians shall be broken before His face, and the heart of the Egyptians shall be melted within them (Chaldee, *his bowels*)” This is an ironic comment about *idols*¹ that cannot move on their own power, and have no hearts, yet it is implied that the idols will fear and tremble. Or rather, that the people who lean on idols shall be the ones who shall move with fear and their hearts will tremble.

2 And I will set^v the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, [and] kingdom against kingdom.

✓ mingle

And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians. The horrors of civil war are announced. ¶ *And they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, [and] kingdom against kingdom.* There are many examples in scripture that show that the enemy became so fearful and confused, that they began to kill each other rather than defend themselves against the people of God (e.g., see Judges 7:22a). Regarding the civil wars affecting Egypt, Gill shares: “For though Egypt was but originally one kingdom, yet upon the death of Sethon, one of its kings, who had been a priest of Vulcan, there being no successor, twelve of the nobility started up, and set up themselves as kings, and divided the kingdom into twelve parts, and reigned in confederacy, for the space of fifteen years; when, falling out among themselves, they excluded Psammiticus, one of the twelve, from any

¹ Cheyne explains that the term for idols, אֱלִילִי, is that of “no-gods.” In 2 Kings 19:18, the concept of no-gods is spelled out: לֹא אֱלֹהִים. The word אֱלִילִי means that which is *empty, vain, nothing* and used in the plural to signify idols (Gesenius).

share of government; who gathering an army together, fought with and conquered the other eleven, and seized the whole kingdom to himself, and who seems afterwards regarded in this prophecy; all this happened in the times of Manasseh king of Judah, and so in or quickly after Isaiah's time: though some understand this of the civil wars between Apries and Amasis, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar. The Septuagint version renders the phrase here, 'nome against nome'; for the whole land of Egypt, by Sesostris, one of its kings, was divided into thirty six nomes, districts, or provinces, whose names are given by Herodotus, Pliny, and others."

3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail[✓] in the midst thereof; and I will destroy[✓] the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

- ✓ be emptied
- ✓ ✓ swallow up

And the *spirit* of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof. The LXX (6) has, "And the spirit of the Egyptians shall be troubled within them; and I will frustrate their counsel." In ancient times, as is the case today, rulers surrounded themselves with the brightest minds from whom they could seek counsel (e.g., see the matter of Ahithophel and of Hushai in 2 Samuel 17). Calvin explains, "Now, the Egyptians had so high an opinion of their own wisdom, that they reckoned themselves superior to other nations ... they boasted that they were the inventors of learning." So, Calvin explains that רִנָּה here stands for "understanding and sagacity" rather than simply *spirit*. In ISAIAH 29:24, רִנָּה is used in the same sense (Gesenius, 3–d). And are there not new nations and philosophers that today have taken the place of Egypt in such boastfulness? The idea of *intellect that fails*, נִבְקָה, is well represented in the margin ||, as something being *emptied*. Likewise, אֶבְלַע is used for *destroy*, and also means, as mentioned in the margin ||, to *swallow up*² (Gesenius, HAL, BDB). Kay continues with this idea: "The word used of the rod of Aaron 'swallowing up' the rods of the Egyptian magicians (Exodus 7:12). With infinitely greater reason would the divine counsel 'swallow up' the cunningly devised

² Regarding this expression, Gesenius points to the "onomatopoeic from the sound of a bottle when emptied, like the Persian غلغ gulul."

policy of Egypt." ¶ *And they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.* When Saul could no longer lean on the Lord for counsel, he turned to the dark side. Regarding the word *charmers*, Delitzsch has, "Then (and this is also part of the judgment) they turn for help, in counsel and action, where no help is to be found, viz., to their 'nothings' of gods, and the manifold demoniacal arts, of which Egypt could boast of being the primary seat. On the names of the practisers of the black art, see ISAIAH 8:19; *'ittim*, the mutterers, is from *'âtat*, to squeak (used of a camel-saddle, especially when new), or to rumble (used of an empty stomach): see Lane's *Lexicon*."

4 And the Egyptians will I give over[✓] into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

- ✓ or, shut up

And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord. Or rather, cruel lords, as the Hebrew (21) indicates the plural אֲדָרִיִּים. The LXX (6) has, "And I will deliver Egypt into the hands of men, of cruel lords." The Syriac (5) has *Medes* for lord. Barnes prefers to follow the KJV, and calls the plural "*pluralis excellentiae*—denoting majesty and dignity, and applicable to a 'single' monarch." Delitzsch and Gill suggest that Isaiah is not referring to a foreign force, but rather to the civil war mentioned in verse two that led to twelve smaller nations. ¶ *And a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.* Barnes has, for a fierce king, "A king of strength"—a description particularly applicable to one who, like Psammetichus, had subdued eleven rivals, and who had obtained the kingdom by conquest."

5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

And the waters shall fail from the sea. Barnes explains, "The parallelism here, as well as the whole scope of the passage, requires us to understand this of the Nile. The word יָם *yâm* is sometimes used to denote a large river The Nile is often called a sea. Thus Pliny ('Nat. Hist.' ii. 35) says, 'The water of the Nile resembles the sea.' Thus, Seneca ('Quaest. Nat.' v. 2) says, 'By continued accessions of water, it stagnates (stagnat) into the appearance of a broad and turbid sea.' Compare Herodot. ii. 97; Diod. i. 12, 96; 'To this day in Egypt, the Nile is el-Bahr, 'the sea,' as its most common

appellation.’ ‘Our Egyptian servant,’ says Dr. Robinson, ‘who spoke English, always called it ‘the sea.’ (*Bib. Researches*, 1:542).” Victor Ludlow suggests³ that the drying up and issues related to the problems with the Nile are explained by the building of the Aswan Dam, “an engineering wonder but ecological and social nightmare.” Despite what has happened in relation to the Aswan Dam, it would not be surprising if the future brings yet further fulfillment of this prophecy: changes so profound that will help the people of Egypt turn to the true Lord and God. ¶ *And the river shall be wasted and dried up.* Cowles says, “The life of Egypt is the river Nile.” Govett writes, “Almost the existence of Egypt depends upon its annual overflow, as it never rains there; hence the extent of the calamity may well be imagined, should such an event occur.”

6 And they shall turn the rivers far away; [and] the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

And they shall turn the rivers far away; [and] the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up. The RV, as do several other translations, has the idea of stagnant rivers or channels of water, “**And the rivers shall stink,**” for **וְהָאֲזִיחוּ נְהָרוֹתָיִם** from the root **נָחַ**.⁴ Gill has, “as the river of Nile and its streams were the defence of the land of Egypt, as well as made for the fruitfulness of it, for these must make it less accessible to a foreign enemy; and besides, here lay their shipping, which were their protection; and moreover, from hence brooks and courses of water might be derived and carried about their fortified cities, which added to the strength of them.” ¶ *The reeds and flags shall wither.* The Targum (T) reads, “The reeds and flags⁵ shall not grow.” For *flags* in the KJV, **סוּף**, translators and the lexicons often suggest either *rushes* or *sea weeds*. Gill comments, that if the reeds and flags, which grew right on or near the river would wither, how much more the crops that grew far away.

7 The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no [more]. ✓

✓ and shall not be

³ For more details see Ludlow (pp. 214–216) and the very interesting notes on this topic.

⁴ To stink or be rancid (Gesenius).

⁵ CAL, **וְגִימָא**, and *papyrus reed*.

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither. The Syriac (S) renders it, “The rushes by the river, and by the mouth of the river, and everything sown by the river shall wither.” The mouth of the river is where the Nile *ends*, in Egypt. Not, as some suggest, its origin or fountain, which rather corresponds to Uganda. Gill explains: “Not at the fountain or origin of the Nile and its streams, but by the sides thereof; on the banks of which grew a reed or rush, called by the Greeks ‘papyrus’⁶ and ‘biblus’; from whence come the words ‘paper’ and ‘bible’, or book, of which paper was anciently made; even as early as the times of Isaiah.” ¶ *Be driven away, and be no [more].* The LXX (G) has, “Shall be blasted with the wind and dried up.” At any rate, the papyrus and crops would fail.

8 The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament. Not only would the disruptions in normal water flow affect the flora, but also the fish in the river, which would perish, causing a devastating famine. ¶ *And they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.* That is, not only those who fish with hooks would be affected, but also those who fish with nets.

9 Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, ✓ shall be confounded.

✓ or, white works

The LXX (G) has, “And shame shall come upon them that work fine flax, and them that make [i.e., *work at*] fine linen.” For a man not to be able to work brings the shame of not being able to provide for the family.

Regarding the word **חֹרֵי** *white works* (margin || for networks, or *fine or white*⁷ *linen*), it seems to mean some other type of fine linen compared to **פְּשְׁתִּים שְׂרִיקוֹת**, *fine flax* or *combed flax*. Calvin says, “If we are to understand **שְׂרִיקוֹת** to mean certain very fine linens, it is probable that the latter clause [**חֹרֵי**]

⁶ See Pliny on papyrus, in Gill.

⁷ Gesenius explains that the singular **חֹרֵי** stands for *white linen*, based on the root for the word *white* **חָנַר** (Gesenius, HALOT).

relates to other productions of the loom, manufactured out of small fine thread, and of the most elegant workmanship.”

10 And they shall be broken in the purposes ✓ thereof, all that make sluices [and] ponds for fish. ✓ ✓

- ✓ foundations
- ✓ ✓ of living things

One possible interpretation is that we here have the conclusion of the list of destroyed livelihoods from the cessation of the strength of the Nile. Regarding the word שְׂתִיתִיהָ pointed as שְׂתִיתִיהָ in the Masoretic (M) text (*purposes* or *foundations*), Gill has in part, “Kimhi observes, that the word in the Talmudic language signifies ‘nets’, as it does; and this seems to be most agreeable to the context; and then the words may be rendered, ‘and its nets shall be broken’; shall lie and rot for want of use.” Some other suggestions that have been tendered include weavers, pillars (nobles in contrast to the common people), something that is drunk (including beer, strong drink or other alcoholic beverage), or even some type of enclosure for holding water which is now broken.

11 Surely the princes of Zoan [are] fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I [am] the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

Surely the princes of Zoan [are] fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish. For the Hebrew (M) *Tzoan* זֵעַן, the Targum (T) has טַאֲנַיִס, so also the Vulgate (V) *Taneos*, and the LXX (G) *Τάνεως*. According to Faussett, this was “a city of Lower Egypt, east of the *Tanitic* arms of the Nile, now *San*.” Several exegetes mention that this was the place where the Lord, through Moses, performed the miracles before Pharaoh (see Psalm 78:12, 43), also a town built after Hebron (Numbers 13:22). Gill has, “The princes of this place, the lords of this nome, though they had princely education, acted a foolish part, in flattering their sovereign, as afterwards mentioned, and in putting him upon doing things destructive to his kingdom and subjects.” ¶ *How say ye unto Pharaoh, I [am] the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?* The Targum (T) suggests that the ‘wise counselors’ say they are the son of the wise, but are speaking of Pharaoh as being the son of ancient Pharaohs—and thus even wiser. The LXX (G) and Syriac (S), instead, have the ‘wise

counselors’ attributing to themselves both wisdom and descent from ancient kings. Ibn Ezra, likewise, has: “Each of [the wise counselors of Pharaoh] will praise himself: ‘my father was wise, my forefathers in days of old were also kings.’” Luther has, “Now there follows a mockery against the Egyptians’ boast of wisdom and antiquity.”

12 Where [are] they? where [are] thy wise [men]? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

Where [are] they? where [are] thy wise [men]? and let them tell thee now. Now that things are going wrong, and all the prophesied evil has come to pass, where are the wise counselors who assured all was well? ¶ *And let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.* The Syriac (S) renders it, “And let them know what the Lord of hosts has purposed against Egypt.” The Lord has permitted men to speak, but now He will speak.

13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, [even they that are] the stay ✓ of the tribes thereof.

- ✓ or, governors

The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived. Gill has, regarding נֹפֶחַ, “called Moph, in Hosea 9:6 where our translation renders it Memphis; and so do the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions here; the Arabic version has it Memphis; the Syriac version Mophis; and the Targum Mephes; the city of *Memphis* is no doubt intended, which was the chief of the first of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, from whence it was called Memphites: it was the metropolis of upper Egypt, and the seat of their kings and princes; it was built by their first king Menes, or *Mizraim*,⁸ and had in it the famous temple of Vulcan; it continues to this day, and goes by the name of Alkair, or Grand Cairo.” It is often from the great metropolis that the philosophies of men are promulgated. ¶ *They have also seduced Egypt, [even they that are] the stay of the tribes thereof.* Gill has, “[The nomes] are called tribes by the prophet, in the language of the Jews, which land were divided into tribes, as the land of Egypt was divided into nomes; and about this time it was divided into twelve kingdoms, as Israel was into twelve tribes.”

⁸ Egypt, מִצְרַיִם.

Those who leaned upon the great men of **Μέμφεως** now have found they have leaned on nothingness.

14 The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit[✓] in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken [man] staggereth in his vomit.

✓ a spirit of perversities

The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof. Calvin has, “The expression is metaphorical, as if one were to mix wine in a cup, that the Lord thus intoxicates the wise men of this world so that they are stunned and amazed, and can neither think nor act aright.” Of course we understand that the Lord does not Himself bring an evil spirit upon men. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in the Inspired Version, corrected the Bible translation in numerous places to indicate this point.⁹ ¶ *And they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken [man] staggereth in his vomit.* The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “And they have caused the Egyptians to err in all their works, as a drunkard staggereth, and tramples in his own vomit.” So we similarly read in Jeremiah, “Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David’s throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness ... Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness” (Jeremiah 13:12–13, 16).

15 Neither shall there be [any] work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

As happened to Israel (ISAIAH 9:14–15), Egypt would be left without prince or common person who can stand against the impending disaster. Gill has “Jarchi [i.e., Rashi] explains it of the magicians, astrologers, and stargazers of Egypt, who, with all their boasted

⁹ For instance, we incorrectly read, “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him” (1 Samuel 16:14) which the Prophet corrected to read: “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit which was not of the LORD troubled him.”

knowledge and wisdom, should not be able either to foresee or prevent the evil coming upon them.”

16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.

In that day shall Egypt be like unto women. Or, *as women* (ⓈⓈⓈⓈ). The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “At that time the Egyptians shall be weak (Royal Polyglot, *like women*).” We see it elsewhere, “they became *as women*” (Jeremiah 51:30), and “Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women” (Nahum 3:13). ¶ *And it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.* Gill observes, “Some think there is an allusion to Moses’s shaking his rod over the Red sea when the Egyptians were drowned, in which the hand or power of the Lord was so visibly seen, and which now might be called to mind.”

17 And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt. Ludlow writes, “The low point of Egyptian military power in comparison to that of Israel was the Six Day War of June 1967. Dozens of books have been written and countless stories told of how, within hours of June 5, the Israeli air force devastated all Egyptian air bases and two-thirds of her air force. In four days of fighting, Israel destroyed the bulk of the Egyptian army and overran an area of Egyptian territory six times the area of the entire country of Israel.” ¶ *Every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.* Most likely, against Egypt.

vv. 18–25. Here the conversation turns away from one of punishment, or consequences for sin, to that of latter-day Egypt turning her heart towards the Lord and being healed.

18 ¶ In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language[✓] of Canaan,

and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. ✓ ✓

✓ the lip

✓ ✓ or, of Heres, or, of the sun

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts. Luther explains that by the language of Canaan, Hebrew and Syriac is meant. Barnes suggests that this probably signifies conversion: “A similar expression, to denote conversion to the true God, occurs in Zephaniah 3:9: ‘For there I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.’” Calvin has, “To vow and to swear are Hebrew ways of speaking and mean to bind oneself to God and have Him as one’s God and worship Him. This pertains properly to swearing. One who confesses God is called one who swears by God. The psalm says (Psalm 63:11): ‘All who swear by Him shall glory,’ that is, all who confess Him ... To ‘swear by the Lord’ often means to testify that he is the true God (Deuteronomy 6:13).” Cheyne observes, “Not ‘swearing by’ (as ISAIAH 65:16), but ‘swearing (fidelity to)’ (ISAIAH 45:23).” Besides the above mentioned Psalm, we have numerous admonitions to confess the Living God, and not to rely upon man or man-made idols (*see*, Deuteronomy 10:20; ISAIAH 45:23; 48:1; 65:16; Jeremiah 4:2; 12:16; Hosea 4:15). But also see Matthew 5:33–34. The number five may be put for part—either small or substantial. ¶ *One shall be called, The city of destruction.* The Targum (Ⓣ) here seems to provide additional information: “The city of Beth-Shemesh (*Heliopolis*, Stenning, *the house of the Sun*), which is to be destroyed, shall be called one of them.” The Talmud tradition (Seder Kodoshim, Menachoth 110a), referring to the Targum, has: “What is meant by The city of Heres? — As Rabbi Joseph rendered it in Aramaic: The city of Beth Shemesh [the sun], which is destined to destruction” (Talmud, Soncino). The LXX (Ⓛ) has, “One city shall be called the city of Asedec ἀσεδεκ [city of destruction].” The Syriac (Ⓢ) renders it, “One of them shall be called Haris, the city of destruction.” The Douay renders it, “One shall be called the city of the sun.” Exegetes explain that there seems to be a play of word, then, replacing “House of the son” for “House of destruction.” Kay also has noticed the LXX (Ⓛ) use of the words *city of righteousness*, πολις ἀσεδεκ (compare with Melchizedek, King of Righteousness). Kay says, “Implying that the effectual overthrow of paganism could only be attained through the establishment of the kingdom of God, which is righteousness.” Delitzsch explains that out of the ruins “something new” would come forth: “Jehovah had proved Himself, to Egypt’s salvation, to be the God of the gods of Egypt. And now, if they who erected this place of worship and this

monument cried to Jehovah, He would show Himself ready to help them; and they would no longer cry in vain, as they had formerly done to their own idols (ISAIAH 19:3). Consequently it is the approaching conversion of the native Egyptians that is here spoken of.”

19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt. There are those who incorrectly believe there can be only one Temple, and that in Jerusalem, and do not understand that the earth will be dotted with Temples built to our Lord. Temples were constructed in the Americas before the coming of our Savior to the earth in the meridian of times. No man, however, has the right to build a Temple to Our Lord without the express authority to do so.¹⁰ Ludlow adds these interesting comments, “Most historians believed that ‘true’ Jews would build a temple only in Jerusalem. After all, they did not build one in Babylon during their captivity, so why should they build one anywhere else ... Following the discovery of the Elephantine Papyri in 1893 and recent Israeli archeological findings in the Holy Land, however, many scholars now acknowledge the legitimate existence of many other Israelite temples. (For example, see ‘Hebrew sanctuaries and temples—those beside Jerusalem,’ IDB 4:566–68.) Now, some Israeli archeologists will assert that if a group of ancient religious, practicing Jews were to be isolated from Jerusalem, one would expect them to build their own temple.” ¶ Young writes, “The language reflects the period of the patriarchs. As Abraham had gone through the land erecting altars to the Lord, so in Egypt there will be such an altar. This altar will not be memorial in nature, like that which the two and a half tribes built by the Jordan (Joshua 22:9ff.), although it does remind of that altar. Nevertheless, it will have religious significance, and upon it legitimate sacrifices to God will be offered. The prophecy does not conflict with Exodus 20:24, which permitted the building of altars in all places in which the Lord would record His Name. The altar upon which the sacrifices are offered simply stands as a representative for the entire cult as such. It is a case of *pars pro toto*.¹¹ An altar dedicated to the Lord means that sacrifices offered to the Lord will be offered thereupon. In other words, the true religion will be found in Egypt; the true God will be worshipped there

¹⁰ Onias built an unsanctioned temple in Egypt (*see* Josephus, Ant. 13:3:1).

¹¹ *Pars pro toto* is Latin to mean the part standing for the whole.

... To say that there will be an altar to the true God in the midst of the land simply means that the revealed religion will be found in the land.” ¶ *And a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.* Gill writes, “The phrase denotes a public profession of Christ, and a setting up of his worship; it is used in allusion to the patriarchs, who, wherever they came, set up an altar to the Lord, and worshipped him.”

20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt. Gill writes, “This refers either to what goes before, that the altar and pillar were signs and witnesses that the Lord was believed in, professed, and worshipped there; or to what follows after, that the Lord’s hearing the cries of men, and answering them, by sending a great Saviour to them, is a token and testimony for him of his great love unto them.” ¶ *For they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors.* The Targum (Ⓣ) reads, “When they shall pray before the Lord because of their oppressors.” At some point, Egypt will turn to the Lord God for help. Young writes, “The Egyptians had been the oppressors of God’s helpless people. Now, however, the Egyptians have turned to the Lord; and hence they themselves will know what all God’s people know, that in this world they will have tribulation. The Egyptians will be no exception; they, too, will face oppression. Whenever there is a true conversion, there will in the nature of the case be oppressors, and from these God will send deliverance.” ¶ *And he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And He shall send unto them a Saviour, and a Judge, and He shall deliver them.” The LXX (Ⓛ) has, “And he shall send them a man who shall save them; he shall judge and save them.” The Syriac (Ⓢ) renders it, “And he shall send them a saviour and a judge, and he shall deliver them.” The Douay reads, “And he shall send them a Saviour and a defender, to deliver them.” The Dead Sea Scrolls (Ⓞ), “He will send them a savior and he will go down and will rescue them.” It is through our intercessor with the Father, even Messiah—Jesus the Christ—that we may be saved. Kay says, “The prophet himself supplies a commentary on this expression in ISAIAH 63:1; where Messiah is introduced saying of Himself, ‘I speak in righteousness, *mighty to save.*’”

21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform [it].

And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation. Naegelsbach makes this astute observation, “The expression ‘shall be known,’ etc., recalls the celebrated passage Exodus 6:3. ‘But by my name Jehovah, was I not known to them.’¹² There the Lord reveals Himself to those that were held in bondage by the Egyptians; here is seen the remarkable advance that the Lord reveals Himself to the Egyptians themselves as Jehovah, that they, too, really know Him as such” ¶ *Yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform [it].* This shows the sincerity of the conversion.

22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal [it]: and they shall return [even] to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal [it]. The LXX (Ⓛ) has, “And the Lord shall smite the Egyptians with a stroke, and shall completely heal them.” The Syriac (Ⓢ) renders it, “And the Lord shall smite the Egyptians; he shall smite and heal them.” The book of Proverbs speaks very much to this topic, that is, that the man of God will accept correction and when smitten will repent and become healed. The word *smite* here represents the loving correction of the LORD. It is an invitation to *return* unto God. Thus we read: “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise” (Proverbs 12:15). Delitzsch has, “In the act of smiting the intention of healing prevails; and healing follows the smiting, since the chastisement of Jehovah leads it to repentance. Thus Egypt is now under the same plan of salvation as Israel (e.g., Leviticus 26:44; Deuteronomy 32:36).” ¶ *And they shall return [even] to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.* The Syriac (Ⓢ) renders it, “And they shall return to the Lord, and he shall answer them and shall heal them.” Calvin would translate: “For they shall &c.,” and explains, “The copulative ַ signifies *for.*” They shall **turn** or **return** ַשׁבוּ to the Lord, then. When it says that the Lord will

¹² “And was not my name known unto them?” Inspired Version.

hear them, it is this signification which Zechariah 1:3 has for me, that when we turn or return (שׁוּבוּ, *repent*) to the Lord, the Savior will turn (*not* repent, but *turn the ear to hear* and turn the arm to bless) to us: “Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.”

23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria. Calvin has, “Now, when he says, in consequence of a *highway* having been opened up, there will be mutual access that they may visit each other, he describes brotherly intercourse. We know that the Egyptians carried on almost incessant wars with the Assyrians, and cherished an inveterate hatred towards each other. He now foretells that the Lord will change their dispositions, and will reconcile them to each other, so that they will have mutual communications, mutual coming in and going out, in consequence of laying open the *highways* which were formerly shut.” The Geneva footnote has, “By these two nations, which were then chief enemies of the Church, he shows that the Gentiles and the Jews would be joined together in one faith and religion, and would all be one fold under Christ their shepherd.” ¶ *And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria.* Barnes, regarding a former fulfillment, has, “There shall be an alliance between Egypt and Assyria, as constituting parts of one empire, and as united in the service of the true God. The same figure of a ‘highway’ is found in ISAIAH 11:16. The truth was, that Alexander, by his conquests, subjected Assyria and Egypt, and they constituted parts of his empire, and were united under him. It was true, also, that there were large numbers of Jews in both these countries, and that they were united in the service of the true God. They worshipped him in those countries; and they met at Jerusalem at the great feasts, and thus Judah, Assyria, and Egypt, were united in his worship.” Most likely, once again, these refer to a latter-day fulfillment of the scriptures. ¶ *And the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.* That is, the Egyptians and Assyrians, together, shall serve the Lord. Here is yet another example of where the KJV was produced with inspiration—despite the reading of the ancient versions (Ⲯ, Ⲥ, ⲩ). The predecessors of the KJV, such as the Bishops Bible correctly has: “so that the Egyptians and the Assyrians shall serue the Lorde together,” as do many of the modern versions (e.g.,

ASV, Amplified, ESV, HCSB, JPS, LITV, NASB, RV, WEB, Webster, and YLT). To give the English speaker an idea of how this verse is rendered, it may read as follows: “וְעָבְדוּ (And shall serve) מִצְרַיִם (Egypt) אֶת-אַשּׁוּר (Asshur).” It is therefore easy to see why so many would make the mistake of thinking that it reads that Egypt shall serve Assyria. But the words *LORD* and *with* are implied in the ellipsis, so that it should read, “And the Egyptians with the Assyrians shall serve the LORD,” or “And the Egyptians shall serve the LORD with the Assyrians,” along the lines of the Bishops Bible.¹³ Gill writes, “that is, the Lord, as Kimhi and Ben Melech interpret it; they shall both serve the Lord with one shoulder and consent, unite in prayer to the Lord, in hearing the word, and attending on other ordinances.” Cheyne explains, “The Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians: The sense of the word rendered ‘serve’ is clear from ISAIAH 19:21. No Israelite could misunderstand the phrase any more than the term ‘knowledge’ for ‘knowledge of Jehovah’ in Hosea 4:6.¹⁴” Rawlinson has, “The more complete fulfillment was doubtless after Pentecost, when Christianity was preached and established in Egypt and Libya on the one hand, in Parthia, and Media, and Elam and Mesopotamia on the other (Acts 2:9–10).” We will also see a latter-day fulfillment of this prophecy, as the Gospel shall be preached in every continent and every tongue.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, [even] a blessing in the midst of the land:

Or rather, Israel shall be a third, along with Egypt and Assyria which shall each constitute a third, all united to worship the Lord. Delitzsch correctly says, “Israel has now reached the great end of its calling—to be a blessing in “the midst of the earth” (בְּקִרְבֵּי הָאָרֶץ, in the whole circuit of the earth), all nations being here represented by Egypt and Assyria.” Israel was placed in

¹³ Alexander has, “The last clause admits two constructions, one of which regards אֶת as the objective particle, and understands the clause to mean that the *Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians*: the other makes אֶת a preposition, and explains the clause to mean that *the Egyptians shall serve (God) with the Assyrians*. In favour of the first is the constant usage of עָבַד with אֶת (Genesis 14:4; 27:40; 31:6; Exodus 14:12, &c.), and the unanimous agreement of the ancient versions. But the sense thus yielded is at variance with the context, what precedes and follows being clearly expressive of a union so complete and equal as to exclude the idea of subjection or superiority.

¹⁴ “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:6).

the center of the known world to be an influence for good.

25 Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed [be] Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

Calvin has, “Though these titles belonged exclusively to Israel, they shall likewise be conferred on other nations, which the Lord hath adopted to be his own ... By calling the Egyptians ‘the people of God,’ he means that they will share in the honour which God deigned to bestow in a peculiar manner on the Jews alone. When he calls [the] Assyrians *the work of his hands*, he distinguishes them by the title peculiar to his Church ... When he comes to Israel, he invests him with his prerogative, which is, that he is *the inheritance of God*, so that among the new brethren he still holds the rank and honour of the first-born.” Delitzsch correctly speaks of the eschatological basis of the prophecy, “The culminating point in ISAIAH 19:25 answers to the lowest point in ISAIAH 19:15. Every step in the ascending half is indicated by the expression ‘in that day.’ Six times do we find this sign-post to the future within the limits of ISAIAH 19:16–25. This expression is almost as characteristic of Isaiah as the corresponding expression, ‘Behold, the days come’ (הַיָּמִים הַבָּאִים), is of Jeremiah (compare, for example, ISAIAH 7:18–25). And it is more

particularly in the promising or Messianic portions of the prophecy that it is so favourite an introduction (ISAIAH 11:10–11; 12:1; compare Zechariah) ... For ISAIAH chapter 19 predicts the saving effect that will be produced upon Egypt by the destruction of Assyria. And ISAIAH 19:23. announces what will become of Assyria. Assyria will also pass through judgment to salvation. This eschatological conclusion to ISAIAH 19, in which Egypt and Assyria are raised above themselves into representatives of the two halves of the heathen world, is the golden clasp which connects ISAIAH 19 and ISAIAH 20:1–6.” Naegelsbach writes, “Egypt is called עַמִּי ‘my people,’ Assyria מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי ‘work of my hands,’ but Israel retains the name of honor נַחֲלָתִי, ‘mine inheritance,’ for thereby it is characterized as the actual son of the house and head of the family.” Alexander opines, “In order to express once more and in the most emphatic manner the admission of Egypt and Assyria to the privileges of the chosen people, he selects three titles commonly bestowed upon the latter exclusively, to wit, *God’s people*, *the work of his hands*, and his *inheritance*, and these three he distributes to the three united powers without discrimination or invidious distinction.”

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