

Isaiah 19 Highway – Egypt, Assyria, and Israel

Before the Blood of the Lamb can redeem any individual or any nation, first they must be humbled. Isaiah 19:1-16 shows the comprehensive humbling of Egypt under the judgements of God. A consistent message of Isaiah is how much God hates human pride. Egypt was proud of every area of her society, so God systematically judges Egypt in all areas, leveling her completely. God is pictured as riding on a swift cloud and coming to Egypt in judgement, making her idols tremble before him (V1). Then God releases comprehensive judgements on Egypt's politics resulting in civil war (V2, 4); on Egypt's religion showing the emptiness of seeking counsel from idols and from the dead (V3); on Egypt's economy by drying up the Nile river, resulting in agricultural failure and economic collapse (V5-10); on Egypt's supposed wisdom exposing her counselors as foolish (V11-15); and on Egypt's military, causing her might to be stripped and her people to 'tremble' like women (V16).

The glowing conclusion of this chapter, however, is not a word of judgement but rather a word of salvation. Isaiah 19:17-25 are some of the most delightfully clear prophecies in the Old Testament of God's saving intentions for the whole world. God chose Abraham out of UR of the Chaldees, promising that through him all peoples on earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). God has never forgotten that intention to save a remnant from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 7:9). In these magnificent verses God goes so far as to bless Egypt by calling her 'my people' (Isa 19:25). How that must have shocked any narrow-minded Gentile-hating Jews throughout history as they read the bold words of this visionary prophet.

Having leveled Egypt's pride with comprehensive judgements God speaks clearly of his intentions to send a Savior to Egypt (V20-22).

“It will be a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt. When they cry to the LORD because of oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and deliver them. ²¹ And the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering, and they will make vows to the LORD and perform them. ²² And the LORD will strike Egypt, striking and healing, and they will return to the LORD, and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them.”

This is such an amazing passage. God’s judgements on Egypt have the ultimate purpose of calling his chosen people among the Egyptians to saving faith in him. God promises to send the humbled Egyptians a ‘Savior and Defender/Leader.’

This must be the Lord Jesus Christ!

The vision here is so sweeping – including a perfect harmony between Egypt, Assyria and Israel (V23-25) that only salvation in Christ can bring this about! There is no record in history of these verses being fulfilled by any human governmental leader. Isaiah 19:17-25 pictures a transformation so spectacular that only Jesus by the Holy Spirit can bring it forth! He alone is the radiance of God’s glory who will make known to the peoples of the world that He is the Transformer, the desired of all nations and the only one who can bring true peace!

Isaiah 19:17 pictures a ‘fear of the God of Israel.’ Isaiah 19:18 pictures transformed cities that will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the God of Israel, Yahweh. Verses 19-20 speak of a transformed religion with an altar built to the Lord in the heart of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord erected near her border. Verses 20-21 speak of the transformed hearts of the Egyptians calling on the name of the Lord for salvation making vows and offering sacrifices to the true God.

Isaiah 19-23-25 prophesies a 'highway' uniting Egypt, and Assyria so they can worship together with Israel, all worshipping the one true Savior, and Leader Jesus Christ!

According to Tom Craig, author of the book, Living Fully for the Fulfillment of Isaiah 19, Assyria today would refer to the many modern day nations of the Middle East.

“In Isaiah’s day, the term ‘Assyria’ was a very familiar (and even fearful) reference to the ruthless empire that stretched (from it’s center) from northern Iraq (i.e. Ninevah – today’s Mosul) to Iran in the east, Armenia to the north, Turkey in the west, and Jordan to the south. The Assyrian empire also included the present-day nations of Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, and even the island of Cyprus. The geographical area that was once called “Assyria,” is today a complex ‘patchwork’ of various political nations and diverse ethnic groups in the Middle East” (Craig, pg 134).

God promises that Egypt and Assyria will be a blessing in the midst of the earth together with Israel,

“In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth,²⁵ whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.”

This vision coming to pass stands as a magnificent answer to the problems of this present age of national arrogance, idolatry, financial corruption, and empire building militarism. And they show that God’s adopted people include Gentiles as the apostle Paul makes plain in Romans 9:25, “I will call not my people, my people and she who is unloved, beloved.” Egypt was at one time excluded but God will call the elect from that nation and every nation ‘my people’ for all eternity.

Paul speaks of God raising up Gentiles to provoke Israel, unbelieving Jews to jealousy. As God pours out his Spirit among Egyptians and cities throughout the Middle-east (modern-day Assyria), may the Lord use them to share the gospel of the Kingdom throughout Israel until she calls on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ as her true Savior and Leader!

“So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Romans 11:25–26 (ESV)

“I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”

This fullness of the Gentiles most assuredly will include a great and glorious revival and awakening throughout Egypt and the Middle East until all Israel is saved.

Let’s again read and hear the great promise,

“In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.”

May we plead the promises of God’s Word, all for God’s Glory and inheritance in the nations and our great joy!

