



PROPHECIES, PROMISES, AND WARNINGS

Isaiah 19 and 20

Isaiah Review:

- The first 39 chapters of Isaiah deal with Judgment and the last 27 deal with comfort.
- Many of the first 39 chapters are difficult, but will pay dividends by the time we reach the last part of the book.
- Written by Isaiah over a period of about 62 years.
- It concerns prophecy of Jerusalem and Judah, primarily, but also prophesy's about Israel (the northern kingdom).
- Tonight's prophecy concerns judgment for Egypt.

Chapter 19

A. Punishment of Egypt (19:1-15)

We have seen over and over again in the Old Testament (even in the Gospels), people have at times looked to Egypt for protection. It could be some people in Isaiah's day wanted to look to Egypt, but Isaiah points out Egypt would be no help, because she would be overwhelmed by God's judgment.

Verses 1-4

- There are internal troubles brewing in Egypt. Judgment was coming against Egypt from the LORD.
- **The Lord rides a swift cloud.** This a picture of the swiftness of God Himself. Obviously a metaphor (Psalm 68:4, 33; 104:3). What is interesting is in Canaanite mythology the same idea was used of the god Baal, the god of rain and fertility. BUT, the Lord, not Baal is the true Giver of rain and fertility. Remember the gods of Egypt in the book of Exodus? The gods of Egypt were many, but were useless to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Their idols would not be able to save Egypt from coming judgment.
- **The idols...will totter at his presence.** Idols are incapable of doing anything because they are nothing but stone or metal, but metaphorically these so-called great gods of the Egyptians would be shaking in their pagodas!



- With no idols to protect them the people would **melt in its midst**. Depression would kick in. What a sad life it would be to trust in false gods.
- The coming judgment would also cause civil war. **Egyptians against Egyptians, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.**
- None of their occult practices could save them, **idols, charmers, mediums, sorcerers.**
- They would be overtaken by a cruel master. In the near view it would be the Assyrians (671 B.C. Esarhaddon). At one time Egypt was the cruel master over Israel (Exodus 1; 1-14), now they would be the object of cruelty.
- And by the way...Look who this judgment ultimately comes from, **I will give...says the LORD of Hosts.**

Verses 5 -10

- How would they know this punishment was really from God? Isaiah shows that the destruction would affect nature.
- Drought, river would be dried up all the plants will wither, all the fish will die from lack of water, no more flax to make clothing or linen. **The River** refers to the Nile. It was and is truly the source of life for Egypt.
- The entire economy would fail because of the Nile.

Verses 11-15

- When God sends judgment, the wisdom of man can do nothing to stop it. Egypt was known for its wisdom and its wise men.
- Not one person could avert the judgment—like a drunkard who cannot stand up straight and falls into his filth.
- **Head...Palm Branch** = Leaders. **Tail...bulrush** = the common citizen. All will be powerless to stop the judgment.

Verses 16 -17

- **In that day.** We will see this five times in this passage, vss. 16, 18, 19, 21, 23.
- It refers to the day of the Lord, the Tribulation up to the Millennium.
- **Egypt will be like a woman.** In other words they will be in terror of Judah because they will realize that Judah is under the uplifted hand of the LORD of hosts. This is going to be a reversal of the situation in the prophet's time.

Verse 18

- **Five cities.** The main cities that represent the entire nation. They will speak the language **Canaan**. Hebrew?
- **City of Destruction?** See footnote in Bible. Maybe City of Righteousness? A difficult Hebrew word to translate.
- Now Egypt is going to **swear** allegiance to the Lord.

Verses 19-22

- True worship of the Lord is going to be instituted in Egypt **in that day.**
- An **altar** for personal sacrifice to the Lord will be set up in the middle of Egypt.
- A **monument** will be set up at the border for all who enter the nation announcing that Egypt is now depending on the Lord.
- This almost seems unbelievable—but it will happen.

Verses 23-25

- **In that day** there is going to be peace on the earth among all the nations.

- Even **Assyria** will be a recipient of peace. The region that was Assyria, including all of Mesopotamia, is within present-day Iraq, an Arabic-speaking country predominantly Muslim in religion. There are many actual Assyrians still alive today. There is a Christian church founded among the Assyrians that has survived throughout the centuries.
- All of this peace is a blessing that will result in a highway from Egypt to Assyria. They will worship together, and Israel will be a one-third part of this blessing.
- Of course, all of this will be a fulfillment of part of the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) that "all the peoples on earth will be blessed through" him.



Chapter 20

The prophecies of chapter 20 are inserted here for Isaiah to make the point of the foolishness of forming an alliance with Cush and Egypt. In chapter 19: 1-17, some in Judah wanted to join forces with them for protection.

For three years Isaiah did not wear his outer garment of sackcloth, or his sandals (he was not completely naked). This was an object lesson to show how the Egyptians and the Cushites would be treated by the victorious Assyrian forces. Israel would be ashamed that they wanted to form an alliance (vs. 5). People would realize that if Egypt and Cush had fallen to Assyria, then they (Israel) had no chance for escape (vs. 6).

The bottom line? Judah should trust in the LORD for their protection rather than in the foreign alliance they were thinking about!

That is probably good advice for us. To trust completely in the LORD. Don't join forces with the world.