

Lesson 12
Isaiah 19:1 – 20:6
Judgment and Salvation of Egypt

Memory verse: “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him.”
Psalms 62:1 NIV

The late Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, a leading prophetic scholar, wrote that Isaiah 19 “contains the most important prophetic utterance concerning Egypt in all of the Old Testament” (Egypt in Biblical Prophecy, 77). It is a remarkable prophecy, for Isaiah declares that the three enemies—Egypt, Israel, and Assyria (modern Iraq) - will one day be united in worshipping the Lord and sharing His blessing.

Egypt was one of the great powers of the ancient world, and being situated immediately to the south of Israel, it was an empire that Israel constantly had to reckon with. Many times Egypt had been the enemy of Israel, at times Egypt had been a refuge for Israel, and sometimes Egypt offered a tempting but ungodly alliance to Israel. In chapter 19, the LORD presents both a prophecy against and for Egypt.

At the time of the Exodus, when the Pharaoh of Egypt would not release the children of Israel from their captivity, the LORD also made the idols of Egypt to tremble at His presence. He directed each of the plagues against a particular idol of Egypt. He knocked over the god Khnum, the guardian of the Nile, the god Hapi, the spirit of the Nile, and the god Osiris (who had the Nile as his bloodstream), when the waters were turned to blood. He knocked over the goddess Heqt, the frog-goddess of fertility, with the plague of frogs. He knocked over the goddess Hathor, a cow-like mother goddess, with the plague on livestock. He knocked over the god Imhotep, the god of medicine, with the plague of boils. He knocked over the god Nut, the sky goddess, with the plague of hail. He knocked over the whole system of Egyptian worship of their gods with loathsome lice and swarms of insects. He knocked over the god Seth, thought to be the protector of crops, with the plague of locusts. He knocked over the god Ra, thought to be the sun god, with the plague of darkness. He knocked over Osiris, the Egyptian god thought to be the giver of life, and the supposed deity of Pharaoh himself, with the plague against the firstborn. God made all the idols of Egypt to tremble at His presence before, and Isaiah tells us He will do it again!

In these days of almost instant communication and of rapid transportation, when in a matter of minutes nations can come to the brink of war, we forget that God is still sovereign and can do whatever He pleases in the affairs of men. God destroyed everything that the Egyptians trusted - their political unity, their economy, religion, wisdom - and made them an easy target for the Assyrians. When the international news is frightening and you wonder where God is, read Psalm 2 and Acts 4:23–32, and take hope.

Isaiah 20 is a footnote to this prophecy and reveals that Isaiah did some unique things to get the attention of the people of Judah. One faction wanted to make an alliance with Egypt and Cush, but Isaiah warned them that such allies were destined to fall. For three years, the prophet dressed like a prisoner of war, wearing only a loincloth, to demonstrate his message. The pro- Egyptian party in Judah gave the prophet as much trouble as the pro-Egyptian people did who journeyed with Moses (30:1–7; 31:1–3; Num. 11; 14).

Will Jews and Gentiles seek and desire the blessings from God who seeks to reconcile them to Himself?

Scripture reading: Isaiah Chapter 19:19-25

Things to learn: 1) Judgment on Egypt 2) Blessings for Egypt 3) The Sign Message

Discussion Questions:

Q1. How would the judgment come about for Egypt as prophesied by Isaiah in chapter 19:1-15?

Q2. Is there any hope, solution for Egypt or even for people who leave God out of their lives as prophesied in verses 16 to 25?

Q3. Isaiah warned his people of the impending failure of their alliance in chapter 20. Why did God want Isaiah to be so dramatic in the sign message to His people?