

The Hand of a Cruel Lord

Isaiah Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

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~ Our Spiritual Safari Scriptural history lesson is considering several judgments God spoke through His prophet Isaiah concerning the eleven nations that surrounded Israel at the time in which we are studying. In our previous report, we examined the rivers beyond Ethiopia; but we saw they didn't experience a judgment, per se – theirs was more of an admonition or a rebuke. God made it clear that Ethiopia will remain a nation in the millennium kingdom; but we know they have faced serious struggles in the recent decades of modern history – and still do. They are under totalitarian rule, plagued with famine, civil war, and economic crises – but they remain intact as a nation! Well, God chastises those He loves, friends. An ensign will come out of Ethiopia *IN THAT DAY*, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will ask the Ethiopian, according to the Psalmist “...*what are you doing here?*” To which they will reply, “...*we were born again here!*”

Now, you will recall in the Book of Acts that it was an Ethiopian Eunuch, while reading *this* prophecy of Isaiah as he rode in his chariot, who was asked by Philip, “... *do you understand what you are reading?*” – to which the Ethiopian replied, “... *how can I understand if there is no man to teach me?*” The Ethiopian would not have understood the Word of God without Philip's help, but he sure did seek God in Scripture; and desired to know the True and Living God in Holy Writ. That, my friends, was counted unto him as righteousness. So, I ask you today: how much do you really desire to understand the Bible properly, correctly and completely? Your answer to that question will determine whether or not *YOU* are in the New Jerusalem when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish His Kingdom here on earth. You might want to think that through very carefully today.

See, a few of these eleven surrounding nations we are considering here in Isaiah will make it through the Great Tribulation period, and into the Millennial Kingdom, too; but their *eternal* destination is altogether different from that of Ethiopia. As we have already learned, Babylon and Moab will be destroyed altogether; but some of the others that do make it through

will discover they have been worshiping a false Jesus – and they will *NOT* be redeemed. Their destination will be eternal judgment in chains reserved in the blackness of darkness forever. Remember, Paul said, “...*God hath given Jesus a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow; of things in Heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth....*”

Yes, even lost souls in torment and damnation will bow to Christ. They are those ‘*under the earth*’ — and will revere Christ in great sorrow and in constant painful remembrance of their rejection of Him in this lifetime. They will clearly see all of the times He reached out to them but they despised Him and turned away. Jesus saith, “... *in hell some shall receive many stripes and some shall receive few stripes.*” Candidly, some will be beaten to death – over and over and over again. It is important to remember that these eleven nations were the kingdoms of the world that Satan offered to Jesus in the wilderness temptation; *if* Jesus would simply bow to the devil. They were Satan’s to offer; but, at the same time, they were already God’s — and were reserved in judgment. So, Jesus rejected the devils offer. Frankly, that almost incomprehensible paradox should make our hair stand up and sober our thinking....

XIX

1 The judgment 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.

2 And I will set 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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?

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.

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.

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.

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

~ The judgment of Egypt is the sixth burden directed at a surrounding nation; although, technically, it is the fifth. Moab received two. The accuracy of the Word of God is demonstrated through Egypt like no other nation, in my estimation. One of the myriad proofs that the Bible is the Word of God is fulfilled prophecy; there's simply no getting around these facts - as we see in this chapter. No other nation figures as prominently on the pages of Scripture in its relationship to Israel as Egypt does. They have the longest history of existence in the Bible – including longer than Israel, of course. Israel was actually born in Egypt – and Egypt always speaks spiritually *of the world* in Scripture.

Remember, Seventy souls went to Egypt from the house of Jacob back in Genesis; and about two and a half million Jews came out about four hundred years later in the exodus. Even at that time, Egypt was already an old nation, friends. Egypt is irrefutably one of the most ancient nations in the recorded history of mankind. Remarkably, they have a continuous and uninterrupted existence — right up to the time I am writing this report and you read it. In fact, Egypt was already on the books when Abraham ran away from God. He went to Egypt where he got into all sorts of difficulties. Later, of course, Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt; and the subsequent famine in the land ultimately brought those seventy souls there.

Both Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah in the southern kingdom of Judah would later make alliances with Egypt that proved to be terrible mistakes. During the inter-testament period between Malachi and Matthew, the nation Israel suffered tremendously at the hand of Egypt. When the Lord Jesus Christ was born, He was taken down into Egypt to escape being murdered by Herod. In the early days of the Gospel being preached, many converts were made in Egypt. During that three century period, some of the greatest saints of the early church arose: Athanasius of Alexandria, Origen from Africa, Augustine of Hippo – as well as several others.

Well, even in their horrible modern condition, Egypt plays a critical role in current events. Egypt is definitely a serious thorn in the side of contemporary Israel. Even so, they have a future according to Scripture; and this chapter contains each and every element of their past, present and future. The first fifteen verses of chapter nineteen are *fulfilled* prophecies.

The remainder of the chapter is almost entirely *unfulfilled*. That makes this one remarkable passage of Holy Writ; and we need to comprehend certain facts succinctly, although we will risk being tedious. I'll try to spare you that tedium, my beloved readers – but I make no promises.

The primary charge of condemnation against Egypt was a rank and unrestrained idolatry. Egypt, at one time, had as many – if not more – idols than Babylon had; and Babylon was the *fountainhead* of idolatry. Ezekiel is going to tell us every idol will disappear from Egypt. Paul said, “... *because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things....*” – and Paul's statement from Romans chapter one verses twenty-one through twenty-three fits Egypt more succinctly than any other nation in the history of the world.

Egypt was originally a monotheistic nation – meaning they worshipped only one God. Gradually they lapsed into the basest sort of idolatry — where every creature that moved under Heaven was worshipped. They worshipped the bull, the frog, the bugs, lice, fish, birds, and reptiles – and you name it – it was their god, when convenient. Remember, when God was ready to deliver Israel from Egypt, He had to carry out a battle of the gods between Him and Pharaoh's magicians. Each of the plagues in Moses' day was directly aimed at one of the Egyptian idols. God struck down their idol worship: from the sun in Heaven to the Nile River on earth to each of the aforementioned worldly creatures. In this chapter, we see the True and Living God coming down once again in His chariot to destroy these idols.

Today, this crude form of idolatry has long since disappeared from Egypt. They dwell in the blackness of ignorance and the superstition of the Moslem philosophy of religion. Of course, Islamism was created *LONG* after this account was recorded. They created their own darkness. If you travel to Egypt today, you will realize that there just isn't spiritual darkness quite like that in Egypt. Interestingly, Israel is in spiritual deadness today, too — but not to the extent Egypt is. Historically, several Pharaoh's came to power

during the time of Isaiah. They could no longer control their own kingdom, and their army's would no longer obey them. Further, the people at that time no longer had any respect for a Pharaoh's rule. That caused the uber-weak establishment of city-states. Up the Nile, Thebes and the other great cities such as Memphis broke alliances and fought bitter wars. Today, their "*presidents*" in Egypt are some of the most horrible, corrupt, fraudulent, oppressive leaders on the face of the earth – equal to that of North Korea and China.

Interestingly, I doubt there is any civilization in the history of the world that has made more cultural, scientific, and educational contributions to mankind than Egypt has. Even so, their abject idolatry ultimately led them in desperation to spiritism. The magicians of Egypt could easily duplicate the first three miracles God brought to them by Moses. That reveals they weren't frauds; they had legitimate satanic power! Of course, the miracles could only be duplicated up to a certain point. There came a time when spiritism failed and ceased; and they could no longer reproduce the miracles God had done through Moses.

The "*cruel lord*" from verse four is most credibly believed to speak specifically of Psammetichus I Livius, who rose to power around six hundred ten B.C. – or about one hundred years after this prophecy was given. The critics will usually say it refers to the Ottoman Turks that invaded the land, or that it speaks of the nomadic Hyksos kings that were Bedouin princes of Asiatic descent. Well, either way, Egypt has had this experience with a "*cruel lord*" myriad times – before and after Isaiah – right up to today. From Nasser to Sadat to Mubarak to Morsi to el-Sisi in more recent history, each and every one could be classified as a cruel lord; and that would actually be an understatement for most of them.

The sea in verse five refers to the Nile River, which was the main life-giving artery of the nation Egypt — and a large body of water. The rivers are the canals constructed to irrigate the land. The mouth and delta area had to be continuously dredged because of the silt and soil that washed down; much like the Mississippi River delta area require almost constant dredging. In ancient times, many areas in Egypt sustained lush vegetation. That has completely disappeared today. Irrigation brought wonders for Egypt — yet

nothing to speak of grows along the banks of the Nile River anymore! Most rivers of the world are encased in dense forests with thick foliage lining their banks – but not the Nile.

Moreover, verse seven speaks of the papyrus plant. In Isaiah's day, making paper from papyrus was a huge industry. Egypt became a wealthy nation when the clay tablets became obsolete to paper. The Phoenicians took the use of papyrus all over the known world of that day. Well, you don't find papyrus in Egypt today; it has disappeared. You might find it being raised at the museum or in gardens of wealthy homes – but it is a luxury plant – no longer the commonplace staple it was when Isaiah wrote this prophecy. See, friends, God said it would cease. Now, you can explain that away any way you want to, but it ceased — just as God said it would — through Isaiah his prophet.

Another big business in Egypt in Isaiah's day was the fishing industry. Remember, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they wanted more than manna; they missed the leeks, garlic, cucumbers, melons and *FISH* from Egypt. God gave them quail; but they quickly tired of quail. God gave them their desire in meat until it came out of their nostrils, you will recall – which is disgusting – but He also sent them leanness to their souls. Well, either way, if you go to Egypt today, they just aren't in the fishing business. Frankly, you'll do well to find three people fishing on the banks of the Nile River. They have fish in the water, but it's no longer any sort of substantial industry. Again, God said it would disappear centuries before it disappeared – and – guess what? - it disappeared.

The Pharaoh's then began intermarrying brother and sister which led to a generation of morons. That's when the steep decline began in Egypt, industries ceased and the leaders became abject fools. This is about where Cleopatra came along and, although she was no Egyptian – she was Greek – she brought about the most sordid story in Egypt's history; and she is what most people think of today in Egyptian leadership. The failure of false religion followed her failure of material resources and mental and spiritual power — and the rest of the nation faded away from there. They have lost everything that ever made them a prominent nation today. They have become an absolute base kingdom. Well, we could go on and on and on

confirming this prophecy, but I think that's enough for this report. We'll get back to Egypt later on in the prophetic section of Scripture. From here forward in this chapter, Isaiah looks way down into the future and ***IN THAT DAY*** – which is a prophetic, technical term referring to the time beginning with the Great Tribulation period and continuing on into the Millennial Kingdom....

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.

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.

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.

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.

~ It is not credible to say that Judah is a present terror to Egypt. Jerusalem is split into east and west, and is mostly controlled by the Arab. The qualifications necessary to jam this piece of the prophetic puzzle into modern prophetic times simply doesn't exist. Further, while many cults refer to the pyramid as the "*altar to the Lord*" the pyramids are neither altars nor are they pillars. No, the pyramids are monstrosity mausoleums for the burying of narcissistic, superstitious kings and queens – and that's all they have ever been, too, by the way. The only thing that could qualify this part of this chapter of Isaiah's prophecy is a cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; and you just won't find the Christian cross in Egypt. For Egypt to be healed and enter into the Kingdom of Christ with Israel is something only God Almighty Himself could ever do....

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.

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.

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.

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.

24 IN THAT DAY shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

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.

XX

1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;

2 At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;

4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

~ This brief chapter is a continuation of chapter nineteen; and it appears Isaiah went running around naked and barefoot for three full years. Tartan was a general in the Assyrian army, and is mentioned in second Kings chapter eighteen verse seventeen. Ashdod was a Samaritan city amongst the ten northern tribes. Sargon succeeded Shalmaneser; and that's second Kings chapter seventeen verse three, by the way. Sargon could not be located by historians or archeologists for a *LONG* time. Even as late as the eighteen hundreds, historians would surmise Sargon never lived. Well, they've found him — written upon the stones and tablets — and there's no doubt concerning anything Isaiah wrote. So, that brings us to the end of this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Bible; and we'll pick up in chapter twenty-one in our next report. I hope you can continue on with us through this remarkable section of Scripture....

5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

6 And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape? ~

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