

# Isaiah 19

## A. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ISAIAH 19<sup>1</sup>

1. Isaiah 19 is a prophetic passage of scripture which reveals the events that will gradually unfold within the nation of Egypt as we approach the End of the Age. These events are part of God's sovereign plan to transform the nation of Egypt from one that worships idols to one that will know and worship Him.
2. Prophet Isaiah begins verse 1 by declaring: "*The burden against Egypt*", before he continues on with extremely detailed pronouncements as to how God will divinely confront the nation of Egypt regarding her history of idol worship, which began approximately 2,800 years ago.
3. God's heart and purpose for this divine confrontation is to heal the Egyptian people from the consequences of idolatry (Isa. 19:2) and to bring about a national and regional blessing for Egypt and the Middle East (Isa. 19:24).
4. Beyond the specificity of details and events that are to come, this is a passage of scripture that also reveals God's heart in His dealings with us. It is this revelation that we are to build our confidence upon, as it will be our strength as God's End-Time storyline unfolds.
5. Isaiah 19 also speaks of a time where Egypt, Assyria (in today's context: the Middle Eastern nations that formed this ancient kingdom), and Israel will be reconciled to God and united with one another in order to become "*a blessing in the midst of the earth*".

For this reality to come to pass, these Gentile nations surrounding Israel must first comprehend and willingly agree with the everlasting covenants that God has made with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12).

## B. THE IMPORTANCE OF ISAIAH 19 TO THE GENTILE CHURCH

As the Gentile Church, it is important and wise for us to take heed and thoroughly study this significant prophetic chapter because:

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<sup>1</sup>Content for this document based on Tom Craig, 2014, In *Living fully for the fulfillment of Isaiah 19: When Egypt, Assyria and Israel will become a Blessing in the Midst of the Earth*. Drawbaugh Publishing Group.

1. This applies not only to Egypt, but also to many Gentile nations across the earth as His End-Time judgements are unveiled.
  - a. Throughout Biblical history, Egypt has uniquely represented “the nations of the world” that have opposed God’s purposes for Israel. How God deals with Egypt provides us with principles of how He deals with Gentile nations.
  - b. Just as God orchestrates events in order to turn the nation of Egypt to Him, He will do the same to other Gentile nations in order for them to turn to the Desire of All Nations (Hag. 2:7).
2. It is significant that God has provided such a detailed description about what He is going to do to “strike” the nation of Egypt. He desires His people in Egypt to prepare themselves for what is ahead for their nation.
3. Knowing what is about to unfold within the Middle East, we as the Gentile Church are to partner with God at the place of prayer to contend for the fullness of Egypt and nations in the Middle East.
  - a. Isaiah 19 also prophesies about communities that will exist in the time of His judgments — the “five cities” (or communities) in Egypt that will swear allegiance to God.
  - b. We should pray for the establishment and arising of these five cities, and also seek God for how He wants us to individually prepare in light of these prophetic verses.

### **C. UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 19**

1. In seeking to understand Isaiah 19 and the prophesied events that would take place within Egypt in those days, it is important to settle in our hearts this fundamental principle that everything that God does, orchestrates, and engineers is out of His zeal for our fullness.
2. We ought not to simply view these events and their severity through our own human perspectives, but to align with God’s. The outcome God desires to produce in us is that we would come into alignment with His heart and walk according to His ways.
3. The first 15 verses in this passage focus on a detailed description of the specific judgments that God, in His sovereign wisdom, has designed for the nation of Egypt. God knows exactly what must be done to “strike” at the hearts of the Egyptians in order to cause them to turn as a nation to Him (Isa. 19:22).

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- a. Verse 1 refers to God's presence coming into Egypt for the purpose of shaking the nation and causing her to turn to Him. Through the events described in the following 14 verses in Isaiah 19, God will accomplish this deliverance and transformation of the Egyptian people such that they may align with God's heart and with His Kingdom purposes.
  - b. Verse 2 talks about a time of widespread conflict and internal strife within Egypt.
    - i. It is God Himself who will cause this internal conflict to arise.
    - ii. This corresponds with Matthew 24:7 — "For nation (ethnos) will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom".
  - c. Verse 3 talks about how the events that are taking place will overwhelm the Egyptians, resulting in their "spirit" failing within them.
    - i. Along with this profound despair, God will also confound their own attempts to deliver themselves out of their difficult dilemma.
    - ii. Their pride and reliance on their own "spirit" or strength must come to an end before their hearts will turn wholly to Him for help and deliverance.
  - d. Verse 4 depicts that Egypt will be under the rule of a "fierce king".
    - i. This "cruel and fierce rule" will produce within the hearts of an entire nation an earnest cry unto God for deliverance.
    - ii. The ultimate fulfillment of this verse is connected to Daniel 11:40–43 and refers to the Antichrist
  - e. Verses 5–7 depict the drying up of the Nile River, which is a crucial source of water, their lifeblood, and the means of commerce for the nation of Egypt.
    - i. God removes this natural source of life that the Egyptians have depended upon throughout history. He has two objectives in doing so:
      - To confront the idols of Egypt — so that the Nile will no longer be their primary confidence.
      - To prepare the way for the return of the Jewish people who will be coming back from the various countries of the earth. Scripture talks about highways back to Jerusalem, especially through the nations of the Middle East (Egypt and Assyria). The drying of the Nile will allow His people to make their

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journey back to Jerusalem when Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom (Isa. 27:12–13; Mic. 7:11–13).

- ii. Other key prophetic references in Scripture to the Nile River drying up include Ezekiel 30:12–13, Zechariah 10:10–11, and Isaiah 11:15–16.
- f. Verses 8–10 describe the afflictions that the industries and workers within Egypt will go through when the Nile River completely dries up.
- i. Whatever the Egyptians have historically trusted in that have become idols within their hearts will be entirely removed.
  - ii. God does this out of His fervent zeal to stir up a response amongst the Egyptians to wholeheartedly turn to Him.
- g. Verses 11–15 describe the political crises that Egypt will face in those days.
- i. The imagery used in verse 14, “*as a drunken man staggers in his vomit*”, emphasises the degree to which the nation of Egypt would be rendered helpless and utterly incapacitated in her circumstances.
  - ii. In verse 15, Isaiah states that in those days, no one in the nation of Egypt will be able to do anything. The “head” and the “palm branch” are used to denote those in honour and authority, while the “tail” and the “bulrush” are expressions used to indicate the lowly common people.
  - iii. The worldly counsel that Egypt and her leaders have been leaning upon will ultimately prove to be insufficient and fail them. God’s heart behind this is to fundamentally turn the hearts of the Egyptians towards His heart and His divine counsel for Egypt that is unmatched by men.
4. The remaining verses of Isaiah 19 contain 7 promises of God, which God has sovereignly determined will follow the events described in the first 15 verses. As the people of God, these serve as an invitation for us to partner with God through agreement in the place of prayer and contending for the fulfilment of these promises.
- a. Verses 16–17 describe the fear of God that will be upon the Egyptians.
- i. Verse 16 tells us that due to the events that will unfold in the earlier verses of Isaiah 19, the Egyptians will begin to fear God. They will be “*afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it*”.

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- ii. Verse 17 tells us that on the other hand, the waving of God's hand over His Church and the Houses of Prayer will also release His signs, wonders, and miracles. These will also stir the fear of God in the hearts of the Egyptians.
  - iii. Proverbs 9:10 tells us that "*the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*". As a result of this increasing fear of the Lord, the Egyptians will begin to grow in divine understanding and wisdom and align with God's heart and purposes.

The fear of the Lord will also lead them to understand their role in His greater purpose and destiny for them together with Israel and Assyria.

- b. Verse 18 describes the 5 cities (or communities) of refuge that will arise within Egypt in those times.

- i. There are two main characteristics of these cities:
  - They will speak the language of Canaan, i.e. Hebrew.
  - They will be known for their devotion and allegiance to God.
- ii. There is going to be a spiritual awakening among Egyptian believers who will, by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, build these cities.

They will understand, by divine revelation and the study of Scripture, that part of their role in God's End-Time narrative will be to provide places of refuge for the Jewish people when they flee from Jerusalem during a time of great persecution by the Antichrist at the End of the Age (Zech. 10:9–10, Matt. 25:35–36).

- c. Verses 19–20 speak about the existence of a dedicated worship and prayer movement within Egypt.

- i. The "*altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt*" speaks of unceasing worship and prayer that will be offered up to God from Egypt (Isa. 42:10–12).
- ii. The "pillar" or monument established on the border between Egypt and Israel speaks of the reconciliation between the two nations.
  - The Egyptians will express the Second Commandment to love their neighbours towards their former enemies, the Jewish people, as a sign and witness to the saving grace and power of Jesus the Messiah.
- iii. Isaiah links the altar and the pillar as a sign and witness to the Lord with God's deliverance through Jesus.

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- d. Verses 21–22 reflect the national spiritual awakening that will occur as a result of the events depicted in the previous verses. It speaks of a time when the nation of Egypt will come to know God intimately.
- i. These two verses reflect the zeal and jealousy of God. He is in passionate pursuit of their hearts, and longs patiently to be known intimately and worshipped by them.
    - God always loves and desires to redeem in all that He does, even in the face of judgement.
  - ii. The Egyptians will not only know God but also worship Him. Their conversion will not be a superficial turning to the LORD, but a profound and genuine knowledge, love, and worship of Him.
- e. Verse 23 speaks of both physical and spiritual highways that will run from Egypt to the nations of Assyria. Not only will the Egyptians come to know God, they will also be united with other peoples of the Middle East (Assyria) and worship God together.
- f. Verse 24 further prophesies about the reconciliation between Egypt, Israel and other nations of the Middle East (Assyria) being a blessing in the midst of the earth.
- i. There will be a work of reconciliation and restoration of covenantal relationships between the two people groups, unto expressing unity and oneness (Jn. 17:20–26).
  - ii. As Jewish people and Arabs reconcile, there will be a unity and oneness that will be attained between the estranged sons of Abraham (Isaac and Ishmael). God’s blessings will flow through them when they are one unto the rest of the earth.
- g. Verse 25 concludes with the blessing that God will declare — Egypt will be His people, Assyria will be the work of His hands, and Israel will be His inheritance.
- i. *“Egypt My people”*
    - Throughout Scripture, there has been no other nation referred to as God’s people other than Israel. In that day, Egypt would have entered into a right relationship with God.
    - It also implies that the Egyptians will understand and be willing to embrace the covenants that God made with the Jewish people.
  - ii. *“Assyria the work of My hands”*

- God speaks about His intimate workmanship among these other nations (Assyria), with the objective to craft them as His own useful possession that brings Him glory and honour.
- iii. *“Israel My inheritance”*
- From the covenants that God made with the Jewish people, they are destined to become “His inheritance”. This also includes the land of Israel (Gen. 12).
  - Through God’s dealings with the Jewish people at the End of the Age, the LORD will fashion their hearts to understand and embrace His most excellent plan through Yeshua their Messiah.
- iv. In Romans 11:25–26, Apostle Paul talks about how aligned the Gentile nations need to be with God’s sovereign plan to bring about the salvation of all Israel before the Messiah returns.
- v. As the events prophesied in Isaiah 19 unfold in Egypt, and as the Egyptians are united with the peoples of the nations of Assyria in worshipping the God of Israel, the Jewish people will be provoked to jealousy (Rom. 11:14). This will lead them to accept Jesus as their Jewish Messiah.

## D. BIBLICAL CONTEXT FOR THE FULFILMENT OF ISAIAH 19

### 1. The Abrahamic Covenant

In Genesis 12, God made a covenant with Abram and promised to make him into a great nation, through which all the other nations in the world will be blessed and brought into God’s Kingdom on earth.

- a. This covenant includes the specific promise about Abraham and his descendents inheriting and possessing the Land of Canaan forever (Gen. 17:8).
- b. Being blessed as a nation is tied directly to a nation’s willingness to bless and stand with Abraham and his descendents (through Isaac and Jacob) in their role within God’s redemptive plan (Gen. 12:3).

Nations must also accept the God-given right of Abraham’s descendents (the Jewish people) to possess and dwell in the land promised to them forever.

### 2. Romans 11 — The Fullness of Gentiles and the Salvation of Israel

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In Romans 11, Apostle Paul describes the interdependent relationship that God has ordained between Jews and Gentiles in relation to His plan for their salvation.

- a. When the “fullness of the Gentiles”, both numerically and qualitatively, takes place at the end of this age, God will use this to provoke Israel to jealousy.

This connects with Isaiah 19. As Gentiles experience salvation in greater numbers, God will use His people especially in the Middle East to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy.

- b. In Romans 9:24–26, Apostle Paul makes a reference to Hosea 2:23, where it says:

*“Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’”*

- c. The blessing extended to Egypt by God in Isaiah 19:25, when He calls the Egyptians “My people”, will be a direct fulfilment of these prophetic verses.
- d. When the fullness of the Gentiles comes, this will provoke Israel to jealousy, causing them to seek after Yeshua and be saved (Rom. 11:26).
- e. In those days, the Jewish people will witness these Middle Easterners who have come to know and love the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and who are now followers of the Jewish Messiah: Yeshua.
- f. Many of these Middle Eastern believers will also grow to have such an ardent love for the Jewish people that they will willingly lay down their lives for their Jewish brethren, so that they may come to know their own Messiah.

Against the backdrop of the Jewish people facing great persecution at the End of the Age, these are the ones who will open their doors to them to provide places of refuge as many flee from Jerusalem.

This full measure of Christ-like love is also what Paul was referring to when he used the phrase “the fullness of the Gentiles” in Romans 11:25.

## E. PRAYER POINTERS

1. Pray for God to shake the nation of Egypt so that they will turn to the Desire of All Nations (Hag. 2:7).

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2. Pray that in the midst of judgements, Egyptians will come to know Jesus as their Deliverer and Saviour (Eph. 1:17–18). Pray that as God confronts them, He will heal and deliver them from their sins.
  3. Pray that in the midst of judgements, God will release the Spirit of the fear of God amongst the Egyptians (Isa. 11:2–3).
  4. Pray for God to release His power through the waving of His hand over the Churches in Egypt (Acts 4:29–30).
  5. Pray for houses of prayer to be set up in Egypt as a sign and a witness (Jude 3).
  6. Pray for God's grace to empower the prayer movement in Egypt to endure in the face of opposition (Col. 1:11).
    - a. For the Lord to bring in the right people to keep the fire on the altar burning without ceasing.
    - b. For a divine upgrade in authority in prayers.
  7. Pray for the awakening of the Egyptian and Arab believers to their role of standing with Israel in the midst of End-Time persecution (Eph. 1:18; Col 1:9–10).
  8. Pray for reconciliation of the sons of Abraham — Israel, Egypt and Assyria — unto the fullness of the One New Man (Jn. 17:21–23).
  9. Pray for the Egyptian and Assyrian believers to walk worthy of their call to express the greater love (Jn. 15) to the Jewish people in the midst of the End-Time persecution (Col. 4:12; 2 Thes. 1:11–12).
  10. Pray for God to establish the five cities in Egypt as “Cities of Refuge” for Israel (1 Thes. 3:10–13; Jude 3).
    - a. For the supply of resources and people with skills and talents to establish these Cities of Refuge.
    - b. For God to raise up or bring in the apostolic leaders to spearhead and build these Cities of Refuge.
  11. Pray for God to pour out His Spirit upon the five cities in Egypt, resulting in unusual revival, boldness, and devotion unto Jesus (Joel 2:28–32).
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12. Pray for the Egyptian and Arab believers to walk worthy of their destiny to be a blessing in the region along with Israel, to bless her and stand with her (Col. 4:12; 2 Thes. 1:11–12).
13. Pray for the awakening of Egyptian and Arab believers to fully understand and embrace God's unique call for Israel as the Holy Nation (Eph. 1:17–18; Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:9–10).

# Appendix

## A. Interesting Facts about the Highway

1. A physical highway connected Egypt, Israel and the Middle East in ancient Rome. This was called the Via Maris that the Romans used for their economic expansion during their rule<sup>2</sup>.
2. There is a link to Abraham and the blessings given to Him. Isaiah 19 is the expansion of the Abrahamic covenant in the new covenant. In the New Covenant, the blessings of Abraham for Israel expand to the nations.
3. This highway corresponds to the route of Abraham's sojourn. Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans, which was Ancient Mesopotamia. He travelled to Canaan, then to Egypt, and ended his journey in Israel. In blessing this highway, God is honouring Abraham and redeeming what he did<sup>3</sup>.
4. These three nations represent the nations where Abraham's descendants were scattered. Sarah's son Isaac settled in Israel. His son Ishmael, from Hagar, was sent to Egypt. Esau and his descendants form what is known as Assyria, or the Arab nations.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via\\_Maris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Maris)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.highway19.org/history-of-the-highway>