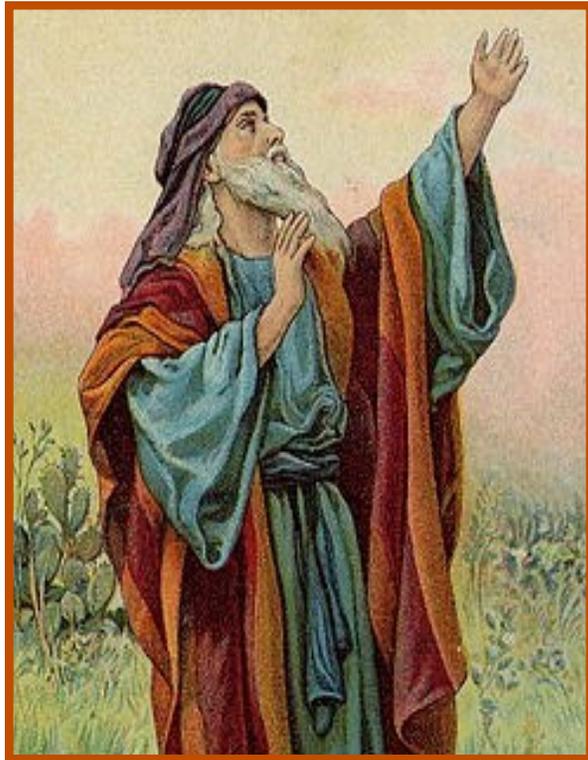


Isaiah then says that there will be an altar to the Lord in Egypt, and a monument, perhaps an obelisk, at its border. We know of a temple there a bit later, at Elephantine (modern Aswan) in the 6th or 5th centuries. He says the Lord will protect the Jews there.

The prophet foretells a highway between Egypt and Assyria. Actually there was such a road, from ancient times. The sense seems to be that in the future God will bring Assyrians, Egyptians and Jews into one people. This was most fully fulfilled later, cf. St. Paul in Ephesians 3:6.

End of Chapter 19



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 19

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 19

Prophecy on Egypt. Summary and Comment. Chapter 19

Riding on a swift cloud (as in Psalm 104. 3) the Lord will come to Egypt. The idols of the land will tremble before Him. (Some have imagined the idols bowing as the Holy Family came into Egypt on their exile there). St. Athanasius wrote exultantly in his work <On the Incarnation> that the triumph of the Gospel in his own land was fulfilling this prophecy.

There will be civil strife in Egypt. Then, being discouraged, the Egyptians will consult idols and the dead.

God will hand them over to a cruel master. This may be Pharaoh Shabaka, founder of the 25th Dynasty, an Ethiopian dynasty, sometime between 711 and 720. Before he took power there had been numerous city kings, with petty divisions in Egypt. Others think the cruel king was Esarhaddon of Assyria, who subdued Egypt in 670 BC.

The prophet predicts the river will go dry. Egypt as Herodotus said was "the gift of the Nile". Only its annual floods made life possible there, by their irrigation of the land. The threats in verses 1-34 remind us of the plagues at the time of the Exodus, when God had previously subdued Egypt.

Egypt had been thought to have specially wise men, but Isaiah says their wisdom will come to nothing. They cannot tell what God has planned against Egypt. Zoan seems to be the same as Tanis. If the late dating of the Exodus is correct (1290 BC), then Tanis would be the city where Moses confronted the Pharaoh and won, after the plagues struck the land. The officials of Zoan and Memphis were thought to be among the noblest of Egypt, who were proud of their descent from ancient kings-- But they will be ineffectual.

The reason: The Lord has poured on them a spirit of dizziness, so that Egypt will stagger like a drunkard in his vomit. Then the Egyptians will lose manliness and be like women. They will shudder at the hand of the Lord raised against them.

Even a mention of the land of Judah will terrify them, as they realize that it is He who has struck them with His judgments. We could either say that the complete fulfillment of all of this must wait for the end-time, or consider this as another example of Hebrew hyperbole -- recalling the words about the sun and moon in chapter 13. Isaiah would then be imagining that the Egyptians remembered the power of God shown long before in the Exodus.

But then, at verse 18, the tone changes to a forecast of future blessings for Egypt. The mention of five cities may be an allusion to the Exodus, in which Joshua, after Jericho and Ai, conquered the kings of five cities who had united against Joshua (cf Joshua 10). It is evident that the number five is symbolic, meaning few in comparison to the total of Egyptian cities. Jews had probably lived in Egypt rather early. The pseudo-Aristeas reports that Pharaoh Psammetik (644-10) used Jews as mercenary troops against the Ethiopians.

Isaiah mentions that one of the five will be called City of Destruction. However the reading here is debated. Some think it means City of the Sun, which would be Heliopolis.