

## Isaiah 18

*Is. 18:1 Alas, oh land of whirring wings Which lies beyond the rivers of Cush,*

*Cush* is Ethiopia and referenced as a *land of whirring wings*, in other words, a *land* inundated with insects. The capital of Ethiopia in Isaiah's day (Napata) was *beyond the rivers* within Ethiopia when viewed from the land of Canaan. Some of these waters within Ethiopia flow northward to form the Nile within Egypt.

*Is. 18:2 Which sends envoys by the sea, Even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, To a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation Whose land the rivers divide.*

Ethiopia sent *envoys*, or *messengers*, to Judah to gain support against Assyria. Isaiah sent them back with a message to Ethiopia. The message is recorded in verses 4-6.

*Is. 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, As soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see it, And as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it.*

Isaiah encourages *all the inhabitants of the world* to listen to his message communicated by the Ethiopian ambassadors. The message is given in verses 4-6.

*Is. 18:4 For thus the Lord has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly Like dazzling heat in the sunshine, Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."*

Even though verses 4-6 do not mention the means through which Ethiopia will fall, it will be Sargon II of Assyria who will bring it about. The bottom line of Isaiah's message is that no coalition with any country could prevent Assyria from overthrowing Ethiopia.

Note: There are several commentaries that view the Assyrians as the ones being struck in verses 4-6 rather than the Ethiopians. Isaiah 20, however, will confirm that this is not the case.

*Is. 18:5 For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms And the flower becomes a ripening grape, Then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives And remove and cut away the spreading branches*

Ethiopia's crops would not be harvested due to the Assyrian invasion.

*Is. 18:6 They will be left together for mountain birds of prey, And for the beasts of the earth; And the birds of prey will spend the summer feeding on them, And all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.*

The *birds* of the sky and the *beasts of the earth* would consume what would otherwise have been eaten by the Ethiopians.

*Is. 18:7 At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the Lord of hosts From a people tall and smooth, Even from a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation, Whose land the rivers divide-- To the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, even Mount Zion.*

The Ethiopians, even though they would suffer at the hands of the Assyrians (vv.4-6), will worship Jehovah during the Millennium (v.7; Psalm 68:31; Isaiah 45:14). Even in Zephaniah 3:10 we find that the *dispersed ones* of the Jewish nation living *beyond the rivers of Ethiopia* will be allowed to return to Jerusalem to enjoy the Messianic Kingdom after Christ's Second Coming. Therefore, the Ethiopians will be sympathetic toward the Jews during the Millennium because they will be worshipers of Jehovah.

### Isaiah 19

*Is. 19:1 The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud, and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.*

The fact that the Lord is *riding on a swift cloud* points to judgment, as does the Second Coming of Christ addressed in Matthew 24:30 (where Christ is described as returning *on the clouds of the sky*). In verses 1-10 of this chapter Isaiah describes the punishment that Jehovah would direct toward *Egypt* due to her sin. God, obviously, is greater than *The idols of Egypt*. He will judge these *idols*,...*And the heart of the Egyptians will melt* as a result of it.

*Is. 19:2 "So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother, and each against his neighbor, City against city, and kingdom against kingdom.*

Internal strife and civil war will weaken Egypt.

*Is. 19:3 "Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead, And to mediums and spiritists.*

*The Egyptians*, due to being *demoralized*, will seek help from *mediums and spiritists* (the occult). God would judge such actions.

*Is. 19:4 "Moreover, I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master, And a mighty king will rule over them," declares the Lord God of hosts.*

*A cruel master...will rule over Egypt*, and the *cruel master* will be Sargon II of Assyria.

*Is. 19:5 ¶ And the waters from the sea will dry up, And the river will be parched and dry.*

God would destroy *the waters* of the Nile, meaning that Egypt's main resource for a healthy and stable economy will be taken away.

*Is. 19:6 And the canals will emit a stench, The streams of Egypt will thin out and dry up; The reeds and rushes will rot away.*

As a result of the judgment against the Nile, *The reeds and rushes will rot*, resulting in the destruction of the papyrus plant from which a variety of products can be manufactured, including paper.

*Is. 19:7 The bulrushes by the Nile, by the edge of the Nile And all the sown fields by the Nile Will become dry, be driven away, and be no more.*

The agricultural areas in the land will fail to produce food due to a deficiency of water.

*Is. 19:8 And the fishermen will lament, And all those who cast a line into the Nile will mourn, And those who spread nets on the waters will pine away.*

*The fishermen will mourn* because of a deficiency of fish. Thus the fish industry will collapse.

*Is. 19:9 Moreover, the manufacturers of linen made from combed flax And the weavers of white cloth will be utterly dejected.*

The deficiency of water in the Nile will also destroy the production of *linen*.

*Is. 19:10 And the pillars of Egypt will be crushed; All the hired laborers will be grieved in soul.*

No one will be able to find employment, bringing economic collapse.

*Is. 19:11 ¶ The princes of Zoan are mere fools; The advice of Pharaoh's wisest advisers has become stupid. How can you men say to Pharaoh, "I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings"?*

In verse 11-15, Isaiah addresses the deficiency of understanding that will exist in *the princes and advisers* within Egypt. Even *Pharaoh's wisest advisers* will possess nothing but foolishness and stupidity.

*Is. 19:12 Well then, where are your wise men? Please let them tell you, And let them understand what the Lord of hosts Has purposed against Egypt.*

Pharaoh's advisers should be telling him that the Lord had pronounced judgment on *Egypt*. No such advice was forthcoming. Therefore, Isaiah mocks Pharaoh.

*Is. 19:13 The princes of Zoan have acted foolishly, The princes of Memphis are deluded; Those who are the cornerstone of her tribes Have led Egypt astray.*

The leaders throughout Egypt (from *Zoan* in the north to *Memphis* in the south) had led the Egyptians astray. It is amazing the number of times that Scripture blames the leaders of a nation for a nation's woes. Note: An interesting project would be to research the decisions that the Egyptian leaders have made since 1948 (when Israel became a state) that have brought humiliation to Egypt, especially in her dealings with the Jews.

*Is. 19:14 The Lord has mixed within her a spirit of distortion; They have led Egypt astray in all that it does, As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.*

*The Lord had brought confusion to the Egyptian leaders, as He does to all leaders who choose to walk unrighteously. They were like a drunken man who staggers in his own vomit, and they are much the same today.*

*Is. 19:15 And there will be no work for Egypt Which its head or tail, its palm branch or bulrush, may do.*

Due to the leadership's lack of wisdom, total joblessness will result.

*Is. 19:16 ¶ In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which He is going to wave over them.*

Verses 16-25 describe a series of events, some of which have occurred in our day, relating to an increase in harmony between the *Egyptians* and the Jews. This eventually culminates with the national regeneration of Egypt.

According to verse 16, Isaiah states that at some point in the future the Egyptians will live in fear due to God's chastening hand on the nation. The main source of their fear is addressed in verse 17.

*Is. 19:17 And the land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the Lord of hosts which He is purposing against them.*

Because God has purposed it, the Jews will cause the Egyptians to tremble. This is happening to some degree in our day; for each of the four times the Egyptians have come against Israel since World War II (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973), she has been humiliated.

The following quote from *Where in the World are the Jews Today* (Victor Books) confirms the accuracy of Isaiah's prophecies.

**In 1967 the Egyptians, backed by Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, pressured the withdrawal of U.N. security forces. On June 4, Cairo radio predicted, "We will wipe Israel off the face of the map, and no Jew will remain alive." On June 5 the Arabs attacked with 650,000 men, 2,700 tanks, and 1,090 aircraft. Israel had 300,000 men, 800 tanks, and 400 planes. In six swift days, the Israelis smashed the attacking armies, took the Sinai, Old Jerusalem, and the strategic Golan Heights. For the first time since A.D. 70 a Jewish flag flew over the Temple site.**

*Is. 19:18 ¶ In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing allegiance to the Lord of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.*

At some point in the future, *five Egyptian cities* will speak Hebrew, *the language* of the Jews. This increased unity between the Egyptians and the Jews will one day result in all of Egypt knowing the Lord, as is confirmed by the remaining verses in this chapter.

*Is. 19:19 ¶ In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its border.*

Because the Egyptians will have come to know *the Lord* (at the end of the Tribulation), *there will be an altar* on which to sacrifice to Jehovah *in the midst of the land* as well as *a pillar* (a memorial) *to Him near its border*.

*Is. 19:20 And it will become a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them.*

The *pillar* (v.19) will be for *a sign and a witness* that the Egyptians have been freed from those oppressing them and received God's *Savior and...Champion*. The word "*Champion*" can also be interpreted "The Mighty One." This is, of course, Jesus, who frees them at the end of the Tribulation to enjoy the blessings of the Millennium.

*Is. 19:21 Thus the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the Lord and perform it.*

Because *the Egyptians will know the Lord*, they will *worship* by offering sacrifices on the altar; and they will perform their vows. These sacrifices will serve as a reminder of what Jesus did on the cross—they will have nothing to do with the sin issue.

*Is. 19:22 And the Lord will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them.*

When God strikes *Egypt,...healing* will result. Therefore, just as the Jews are converted nationally at the end of the Tribulation, the Egyptians will be converted as well. Another nation will also be converted, as is addressed in the following verses.

*Is. 19:23 ¶ In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.*

Ancient *Assyria* basically covered present day northern Iraq and parts of Syria—both Arab territories and bitter enemies of Israel today. However, peace will eventually exist between Israel, *Egypt*, and *Assyria* in conjunction with their conversion. *A highway* will extend *from Egypt to Assyria* during the Millennium, a *highway* that will travel through Israel. This will allow *the Egyptians,...the Assyrians*, and Israel to worship Jehovah together.

Note: The Via Maris, a highway that travels from Egypt, through Israel, to Mesopotamia (where ancient Assyria and Babylonia were located), was built in the past but was closed in 1948 by Egypt (to the south) and Syria (to the north), the year Israel became a state. During the Millennium it will be reopened.

*Is. 19:24 ¶ In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth,*

Not only will the Jews be a *blessing* during the Millennium, but the Egyptians and the Assyrians will become a *blessing* as well.

*Is. 19:25 whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."*

During the Millennium, *Egypt* will be God's *people*, *Assyria* the work of His hands, and *Israel* His inheritance.

Taking what we have studied here and tying it in with the prophecies of the other writing prophets, we can conclude the following. For sure, the judgments of the Tribulation will bring repentance within *Egypt*, resulting in the entire nation accepting Jesus as Messiah (that is, all Egyptians who are on the earth at the end of the Tribulation). However, due to her previous animosity toward the Jews (Joel 3:19), the Egyptians will be driven out of their land and scattered among the nations for the first *forty years* of the Millennium (Ezekiel 29:8-16). But as Isaiah has already confirmed, the Egyptians will be brought back to Egypt. Things will be different once this restoration occurs. Egypt will be a lowly kingdom during the Millennium (*the lowest of the kingdoms*) and no longer serve as a stumbling block to the Jews (Ezekiel 29:13-16). (The Jews, on numerous occasions in the past, have gone to the Egyptians for military assistance rather than trust Jehovah for deliverance.) The Egyptians will even *celebrate the Feast of Booths* (the Feast of Tabernacles) in Jerusalem on a yearly basis throughout the Millennium (Zechariah 14:16-19).







