

Chapter 19-21

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 19?

You'll recall we're in this section of God's judgments against a variety of nations-this will go for the next several weeks. Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, and Tyre. Even his own capital city of Jerusalem. Not exactly a bright and cheery message.

But through all of this we see God's faithfulness. Hey what God says, He will bring to pass! And what we'll see through this is not only the fulfillment of these prophecies, but also how some of these point to a future time that the book of Revelation declares.

We're gonna study chapters 19-21, and the title of tonights

message is God's Word Shall Pass

Let's pray

We start off tonights chapters with a proclamation against Egypt, and remember God is going to use the Assyrians as His tool of judgment against these nations

1 The burden against Egypt.

Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence,

And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst. In the days of Isaiah, Egypt was nowhere near the superpower it was back in Moses' day. The nation had been fragmented by infighting, so Egypt was considered easy prey for Assyria.

2 "I will set Egyptians against Egyptians;
Everyone will fight against his brother,
And everyone against his neighbor,
City against city, kingdom against kingdom. The Lord had no shortage of ways to bring nations down. In the case of the Egyptians, He used civil war to weaken them.

3-4

3 The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
I will destroy their counsel,
And they will consult the idols and the charmers,
The mediums and the sorcerers.

4 And the Egyptians I will give
Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,"
Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts. Egypt was always a land of idols. Now in the Day of Judgment the Egyptians will learn how useless false gods are

5 The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted and dried up. Next to NASA's lunar missions the greatest engineering feat of the 1960s was the constructing of the Aswan Dam by Egyptian and Soviet engineers.

SHOW PIC The Nile River is the longest in the world. It runs 4,145 miles in length. The dam is 2 miles wide and 365' high. It was built at a cost of \$900 million. The idea behind the project was to use the Nile for year round irrigation, and to provide electricity. At the time it seemed like a good idea... **CLOSE PIC**

The Nile is muddy and unpredictable. The Aswan Dam seemed like a great way of controlling a nuisance. That was the opinion of the experts in 1960 - not so today.

SHOW PIC Currently, the Aswan Dam is viewed as one of the biggest ecological disasters in the history of the modern world. These next verses are amazing. Writing 2700 years ago, Isaiah predicts this modern day calamity... **CLOSE PIC**

6-10

6 The rivers will turn foul;

The brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up;

The reeds and rushes will wither.

7 The papyrus reeds by the River,[fn] by the mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,

Will wither, be driven away, and be no more.

8 The fishermen also will mourn;

All those will lament who cast hooks into the River,

And they will languish who spread nets on the waters.

9 Moreover those who work in fine flax

And those who weave fine fabric will be ashamed;

10 And its foundations will be broken.

All who make wages will be troubled of soul. The Nile is central to Egypt's livelihood. But the Aswan Dam has been an economic disaster. Here's what the Aswan engineers overlooked.

The Nile brought down large amounts of silt from the mountains. This provided food for the fish and when the Nile overflowed its banks it fertilized the soil. Now fishing is nonexistent, and the soil is malnourished.

This lack of silt has also caused the mouth of the Nile that feeds into the Mediterranean Sea to erode. This has created salt water intrusion and a poisoning of the river as it flows northward.

SHOW PIC Another problem exists. There's a snail that eats vegetation along the river. The silt used to kill these snails. Now the snails can multiply without hindrance. Isaiah saw all these problems. **CLOSE PIC**

11-12

11 Surely the princes of Zoan are fools;
Pharaoh's wise counselors give foolish counsel.
How do you say to Pharaoh, "I am the son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?"

12 Where are they?
Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now,
And let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt. God is against Egypt, until she repents. And Egypt will repent one day as we'll see shortly

13-15

13 The princes of Zoan have become fools;
The princes of Noph[fn] are deceived;
They have also deluded Egypt,
Those who are the mainstay of its tribes.

14 The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt to err in all her work,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.

15 Neither will there be any work for Egypt,
Which the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.[fn] true to this day, the Egyptian economy is very unstable

16-17

16 In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. 17 And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it. Each time Egypt and Israel has squared off in battle, Israel has whooped them. In 1948, in 1956, in 1967 - again in 1973. In the Yom Kippur War, Israel General Ariel Sharon drove his tank brigade deep into the Sinai - behind Egyptian lines. The Israelis surrounded Egypt's entire third army.

Finally, in 1978 the Egyptians gave up their desire to annihilate Israel. Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David peace accords.

The next several verses give us insight into a yet unfulfilled prophecy regarding Egypt

18 In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.[fn] The day is coming when Egyptians will be speaking Hebrew and worship God!

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 at its border. A spiritual awakening will occur in the land of idols. Egyptians will realize Israel's God is the one true God. They'll establish altars and memorials to Yahweh.

20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. According to Daniel 11 when the Antichrist's army sweeps into Israel he'll also invade other nations. Daniel 11 41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

Yet the Messiah, a "Mighty One," will not only come to rescue Jews, He'll also deliver the Egyptians. And this stirs up a revival in Egypt,
21-23

21 Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. 22 And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. But notice the provocative phrase stated in verse 22, “They will return to the LORD...” Implied is that the Egyptians once knew the Lord... but when was that? Most scholars believe this refers to the early Christian era when a strong community of believers formed in Egypt - in Alexandria. It was called the Coptic Church.

24-25

24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, 25 whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.” Assyria, or Iraq, and Egypt will come to Jerusalem on the highway of holiness not to attack the Jews but to worship with them. What a sight that will be as the Egyptians come from the south and the Iraqis come from the north to worship the true and living God with His people.

Chapter 20 the scene shifts back to the Assyria war machine

1 In the year that Tartan[fn] came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, A lot of Isaiah’s prophecies have flip-flopped back and forth from immediate to future - from 700 BC, until the end of the age.

Here Isaiah helps us get our bearings. He pinpoints where he is on the timeline. The northern Hebrew kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC, with the fall of Samaria. Eleven years later, in 711 BC an Assyrian General, Tartan, conquered the coastal city of Ashdod. The fall of the Philistine city sent word to Judah that they were next in line for an Assyrian invasion.

2-5

2 at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

3 Then the LORD said, “Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, 4 so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. Some Bible teachers suggest Isaiah didn’t actually strip completely naked. Just down to his inner garment - his underwear, so to speak.

The idea was to send a visual message to the people who saw him. They knew his nakedness and bare feet represented a POW. This illustrated his prophecy. Assyria will invade Egypt and Ethiopia.

5-6

5 Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. 6 And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?’ Isaiah’s prophecy of judgment on Egypt and Ethiopia was not just a message to those two nations. It also spoke to God’s people, Judah.

The Jews had just forged an alliance with their neighbors in Africa to protect them against Assyria. Isaiah is saying to Jerusalem, Egypt will be no help. Jerusalem needs to put their trust in God, not in man.

And this is also a lesson we need to learn continuously learn. Rather than put your trust in the doctor, or union, or government, or coach - trust in the Lord!

Chapter 21

The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed

1-2

1 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

As whirlwinds in the South pass through,
So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.

2 A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!

All its sighing I have made to cease. During Isaiah's day, Assyria was the world power. It would be another 100 years before the rise of the Babylonian empire. Yet here Isaiah not only speaks of Babylon, but two of the groups who will conquer and overthrow its future empire - the people of Elam (persia) and of Media.

We read Isaiah from the perspective of history and marvel at the precision of his prophecies. Whereas Isaiah's first readers might've wondered if he was nuts.

3 Therefore my loins are filled with pain;
Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when I heard it;
I was dismayed when I saw it.
4 My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me;
The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me. The fact that judgment was coming didn't bring Isaiah joy. The destruction was so real to him he physically pained by it.

I'm always wary of Christians who delight in the destruction of others...

5 Prepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield! The very night Babylon fell historically, when the Medo-Persian troops entered the city, Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, was throwing a huge party with all of his princes. They knew the Medes and Persians were outside the city walls.

But, with walls so thick that chariot races were held on top, they thought their city was absolutely invincible.

But the very night the Babylonians were eating, drinking, and polishing their shields, reveling in their power and prowess, their city fell. We see this in Daniel 5

6-9

6 For thus has the Lord said to me:

“Go, set a watchman,

Let him declare what he sees.”

7 And he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen,

A chariot of donkeys, and a chariot of camels,

And he listened earnestly with great care.

8 Then he cried, “A lion,[fn] my Lord!

I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime;

I have sat at my post every night.

9 And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen!”

Then he answered and said,

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen!

And all the carved images of her gods

He has broken to the ground.” This is the reaction of a far-away city when news arrives of Babylon’s fall. And here again we see in Isaiah a blending of both the immediate and the future.

Revelation 18 speaks of events that will occur near the end of the age... John sees another Babylon - either a future, rebuilt Babylon - or a kingdom with the same name and idolatrous spirit as ancient Babylon. But that Babylon is also toppled.

In fact, God rains down fire on the city. In [Revelation 18:2](#) And he cried mightily[fn] with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

And notice what the messenger to this city cries out in v8, “**A lion, my Lord!**” The fall of this future Babylon will be at the claws of a lion. Think of Revelation 5, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Jesus Christ) has prevailed.”

Babylon’s judgment ends in verse 10,

10 Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!
That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
I have declared to you. This too reads like Revelation. In Revelation 14 an angel appears in the clouds with a sharp sickle in his hand. He thrusts in His sickle and the earth is brought to judgment. One day Jesus will return to separate the wheat from the chaff.

V11-12 is a proclamation Against Edom

11 The burden against Dumah.

He calls to me out of Seir,
“Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?

12 The watchman said,
“The morning comes, and also the night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
Return! Come back!”

”The Edomites lived south of the Dead Sea. Their stronghold was the rock fortress of Petra. They were kin to the Moabites. We talked about Moab in chapters 14-15. Isaiah predicted the Assyrians would invade Moab. And while they were at it they would press even further south into the land of Edom.
Proclamation Against Arabia

13 The burden against Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
O you traveling companies of Dedanites. SHOW PIC When you think of the Arabian Peninsula you think of barren hills, and sand blown deserts. Or perhaps an oasis pool in a date palm grove. But here Isaiah speaks of “the forest in Arabia.”

SHOW PIC Today, the only forest in Saudi Arabia is in the southwest - there's a forest in the Asir Mountains. In Bible times, the Peninsula was much wetter and cooler, and more conducive for forested areas in other parts. CLOSE PIC

14-15

14 O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
Bring water to him who is thirsty;
With their bread they met him who fled.
15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword,

From the bent bow, and from the distress of war. Dedan and Tema were nomadic tribes that roamed the Arabian Peninsula. Evidently, these Arabian bands narrowly escaped the destruction of the invader.

16-17

16 For thus the LORD has said to me: "Within a year, according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail; 17 and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken it." "Kedar" was another Bedouin tribe that roamed the sands of northern Arabia. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael. Abraham was his grandpa. But the Assyrians will invade Arabia - and Kedar's "mighty men" will fall.