

The Book of Isaiah

The Land Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 though chapter 20 tie together. They deal with the “woe” of Ethiopia” (**Chap. 18**), the “burden” of Egypt (**Chap. 19**) and the timing in which both prophecies were given (**Chap. 20**).

The word “burden” is not mentioned in connection with the “land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia”. A “Woe” is pronounced against the land, however. It is my understanding that this chapter is dealing with Ethiopia (see Isaiah 20:3-5). The land shadowing with wings is a specific place beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (**vs. 1**). Ethiopia is in Africa, south of Egypt.

Ethiopia will send ambassadors by the sea, to a nation that is “scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled” (**vs. 2**). As to whom this nation is referring is questionable. However, my understanding is that it would be Egypt given chapter 20 in referencing both Ephraim and Egypt together. It would be Egypt then that shall bring a “present” unto the Lord of hosts, to mount Zion (**7**). This passage is a prophetic reference to a time when all the Gentile nations shall bring their gifts unto Jerusalem following the establishment of the Lord’s Kingdom (see **Zeph. 3:9-10; Ps. 72:8-11; Isaiah 60**), the time where the Lord takes His “rest” (**vs. 4**) an obvious reference to the Millennial kingdom.

The Book of Isaiah

The Burden of Egypt

Chapter 19

Egypt is one of the most important nations in the Bible. It is referred to over 600 times in the Bible – Only Israel is mentioned more than Egypt. As amazing as this sounds according to these passages Egypt and Assyria will worship the Lord one day.

The Judgment of the LORD (vs. 1): The timing of this event is the Lord's Return when He "*rideth upon a swift cloud*" (vs. 1 cf. **Psalm 68:4, 33**). Egypt's gods will fail them in that day as the heart of Egypt melts at the coming of the Lord.

The Land of Egypt will turn into total chaos as civil war breaks out (2-3): Upon the return of the Lord, Egyptian will be against Egyptian as civil unrest sweeps the land. In desperation Egypt will seek council from their gods to no avail (vs. 2-3).

God's Judgments against the gods of Egypt:

1. Water turned into blood (Ex. 7:19-25) – An attack on the god Osiris – the giver of life: When the water was turned to blood, it brought death instead of life.
2. The plague of frogs (Ex. 8:16-15): Heka, the frog headed goddess of resurrection. It was an offense to kill the sacred frog.
3. The plague of lice (Ex. 8:16-20): The Egyptians worshipped the earth-god, Seb. But "the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt."
4. The plague of flies (Ex. 8:20-32): Hatkok, goddess wife of Osiris.
5. The plague of murrain (Ex. 9:1-7): Murrain was a disease that affected cattle. Aimed at the worship of the black bull god, Apis.
6. The plague of boils (Ex. 9:8-17): "Imhotep," the god of medicine.
7. The plague of hail (Ex. 9:18-35): God demonstrates His power over the sky-goddess (Nut) who is powerless in her own domain.
8. The plague of locusts (Ex. 10:1-20): "Seth," the protector of crops. The plague of locusts meant the crops were cursed.

9. The plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21-29): This was against the chief god that was worshiped – Ra, the sun god.

10. Death of the firstborn (Ex. 11-12:36): According to the religion of Egypt, the firstborn belonged to the gods of Egypt. In other words, God took what belonged to the gods of Egypt.

The Cruelty of a Fierce King (vs. 4): Just as the Assyrian Pharaoh was “a cruel lord” over the Israelites 3,500 years ago (Ex. 1:8 cf. Isa. 52:4) and as Sargon was cruel to Egypt historically during the time of Isaiah (Isa. 20:1,4); so, God will place a cruel and fierce king over Egypt, the future Assyrian Antichrist (Dan. 8:23 cf. Isa. 10:5).

The Judgment of Severe Drought (vss. 5-10): The Nile River is the lifeline of civilization in Egypt. The Nile even today is regulated yearly as to how much water can be diverted from its flow. Egypt has less than 2 inches of rainfall a year. There would be no Egypt without the Nile River.

The Judgment of Confused Government (vss. 11-17): The Lord will mingle a perverse spirit among the rulers of Egypt causing them to err in judgment (vs. 14). Notice the emphasis on the deceived and seduced leadership:

“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?” (Isa 19:11)

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. (Isa 19:13)

Zoan is on the northeast boarder of Egypt. It was the capital of Egypt. This is where God performed many of His wonders in Egypt (Ps. 78:12, 43). Noph is the ancient city of Memphis located at the southern tip of the Nile Delta.

The Day of the Lord Dominance over Egypt (16-17): In the Day of the Lord Egypt will be stricken with fear because of the judgment from the Lord (vs 16) and the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt for the council from the One who sits upon the throne (vs. 17).

The Conversion of the Land of Egypt (18-25): These passages are an amazing prophecy to take in. According to these passages Egypt and Assyria will be united with Israel and turn unto the God of the Hebrews (Zeph. 3:8-10).

The pure language of the Hebrew will be spoken in the cities of Egypt (vs.1)

It will be at this time that true worship will be established in the "*midst of the land of Egypt*" (vs. 19) because when they cried by reason of their oppressors the Lord will come and saved them and delivered them (vs.20).

And the Egyptians shall know the Lord (vs. 21): The Egyptians will be converted to Judaism, for they "**shall do sacrifice**", shall offer sacrifices to the Lord, and shall do "**oblations**" or offerings. "**Oblation**" denotes any offering that is not a "**bloody**" sacrifice - a thank-offering, an offering of incense, flour, grain, etc. The sense is that they should be true worshippers of God.

"**They shall vow a vow unto the Lord to perform it**", they shall be sincere and true worshippers of God. The Jews were accustomed to express their gratitude to God by vows, and especially rendering thanksgiving by a solemn vow, when they had received from God any extraordinary blessing.

Verse 21 is a recap of the previous verses. God judged, He healed and restored the Egyptian.

A Highway of Peace (23-25): The "*highway*" (vs. 23) signifies the removal of the enmity between these three lands (*Egypt, Assyria, and Israel*). Israel will be a "*third*" with Egypt and Assyrian (vs. 24), they shall be united: "**Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance**". (vs. 25)

