

Israel, Egypt, and Arabs: Epicenter of God's End-Time Plan (Isa. 19:24)

I. BASIC PREMISES

A. The end of Isaiah 19 describes the greatest national and international miracle in history. It will occur in context to Jesus' **re**turn. The implications will impact the whole earth. The story is very dramatic. The Old Testament prophets provide much more information to fill in the gaps to this global story. There are 150 chapters in the Bible in which the main subject is the generation that Jesus returns.

B. Both God's glory and deep darkness will increase greatly in the end times. Isaiah 60:2 highlights the unique dynamics related to an unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit resulting in a great harvest, a victorious Church (Rev. 19:7), and the national salvation of Israel and Egypt (Isa. 19:21; 60:21). This will occur in context to escalating darkness and judgment in the generation that Jesus returns.

²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa. 60:2)

"...I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations..." (Hag. 2:7)

C. I identify 4 common interpretations of the biblical narrative of escalating darkness and glory.

1. Those who proclaim **both** the coming unprecedented revival in context to escalating darkness.
2. Those who proclaim **only revival** while denying or minimizing the escalating darkness.
3. Those who proclaim **only the escalating darkness** while denying or minimizing revival.
4. Those who see prophecies of trouble as being **mostly fulfilled** in AD 70 or as symbolic.

D. What the Spirit will do in fullness when Jesus returns in releasing God's glory and/or judgments, He is doing now *in part* and in an accelerating way, leading up to Jesus' return. Thus, we pray for millennial promises to be released in part now, knowing that their fullness awaits His return.

E. Isaiah's prophecy crescendos in 19:23-25, describing the greatest international social miracle in history in the deep unity and spiritual maturity of the redeemed in Israel, Egypt, and Assyria (Isa. 19:24) as the epicenter of the Spirit's worldwide work (Jn. 17:23; Rev. 19:7). This will include an unprecedented outpouring, persecution, the shaking of the nations by God and the devil, etc.

²³In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria...and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. ²⁴In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land [to earth], ²⁵whom the LORD of hosts shall bless..." (Isa. 19:23-25)

1. The highway in Isaiah 19:23 is a literal highway that is the by-product of a supernatural unity between the nations represented by Israel, Egypt, and Assyria (Isa. 19:24; Jn. 17:23).
2. This includes national salvation for Israel, Egypt, and parts of the land represented by Assyria.

²¹The LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD... (Isa. 19:21)

- F. Jesus will restore agriculture, atmosphere, and animal life to the conditions in the garden of Eden.
- ³⁵This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden... (Ezek. 36:35)***
1. The result will be the release of the blessing of the garden of Eden, first in Jerusalem, then throughout Israel, Egypt, Assyria (Isa. 19:24; 51:3; Ezek. 34:29; 36:35; 47:6-12).
 2. Millennial Jerusalem will be the epicenter from which “garden-of-Eden” blessings will spread progressively to fill the earth with His glory (Isa. 11:6-9; 35:1-8; 51:3; 65:17-25; Hab. 2:14).
- G. The highway in Isaiah 19:23 is a physical highway that will be built after the Lord returns. It will facilitate the remarkable relational, economic, political, and **spiritual** unity that will exist in fullness.
1. Isaiah prophesied that a physical “highway” would be established through **the** wilderness and desert regions. He wrote about it 7 times directly and 3 times indirectly (Isa. 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 43:19; 49:11-12; 62:10; cf. 42:16; 43:2, 5-9; 57:14; Jer. 31:8-9, 21).
 2. This end-time highway will be used by Jewish refugees returning to Israel and by Gentiles coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).
- H. Isaiah highlighted many aspects of this highway—
1. It is for the *remnant of Israel returning to Zion* after God dries up the Euphrates (11:15-16).
 2. It *connects Assyria and Egypt* and facilitates international interaction and relationships (19:23).
 3. It is called the *Highway of Holiness* for the redeemed to walk on when returning to Jerusalem (35:8).
 4. It is a *highway in the desert for God* when all flesh will see God’s glory together (40:3).
 5. *God will make a road in the wilderness* and rivers in the desert when He does a new thing related to Jesus’ return (43:19).
 6. *God will make a road through mountains* and elevate His highways so the remnant of Israel may return from the north and west and from Sinim (most see this as China; 49:11-12).
 7. It is a divine call to *build a highway for the people* to enter Jerusalem (62:10).
- I. Premise: Israel will be provoked to godly jealousy to experience God’s love and power that they will witness in the lives of Gentile believers walking the fullness of the Spirit (Rom. 11:11). Israel’s national salvation is connected to the fullness of the Gentiles in the end times (Rom. 11:25).
- ¹¹...to provoke them [Israel] to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles...²⁵blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved ...³⁰For as you [Gentiles] were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹even so these [Israel] also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy...³³Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:11, 25-33)***

J. God intentionally set things in motion in Genesis 12-25 that put Him in “*divine checkmate*.”

II. JESUS PROPHESED A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED CARNAGE (MT. 24:15-22)

A. Jesus prophesied that difficulties in Israel and the nations will surpass any time in history (24:21) with unprecedented death tolls (24:22). Jesus emphasized the unprecedented carnage by saying that if this time were not kept short (42 months), no humans would physically survive it.

¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [in Jerusalem]” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything...²¹Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world...nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved... (Mt. 24:15-22)

B. In **Matthew** 24:15 **and** 21, Jesus **referred** to the final vision in the book of Daniel (Dan 11-12) where the abomination of desolation occurs and the Antichrist sets up his palace in the land (Dan. 11:45), launching his reign of terror, bringing unprecedented trouble to Israel and the nations (Dan. 12:1).

³¹[The Antichrist]...shall place there [in the Jerusalem temple] the abomination of desolation... ³²but the people who know their God shall...carry out great exploits...⁴¹He [Antichrist] shall also enter the Glorious Land [Israel], and many countries shall be overthrown...⁴⁵He shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain [Jerusalem]...^{12:1}At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was...even to that time. (Dan. 11:31-12:1)

1. The four angels bound at the Euphrates River will kill 1/3 of all the Gentiles—3 billion?

¹³... I heard a voice...¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵So the angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day...were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:13-15)

2. The carnage will be seen in Israel as 2/3 in the land are killed and 1/3 are saved (Zech. 13:8). The Hebrew word *ha'arets* or *eretz* can mean the “earth” or “land.” It often refers to the land of Israel. The context determines which to use—land or earth—but sometimes is inconclusive.

⁸It shall come to pass in all the land [eretz: land of Israel or the earth],” says the LORD, “that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: ⁹I will bring the one-third through the fire...I will answer them...” (Zech. 13:8-9)

C. The subject of Israel and Christians enduring captivity in the end times is a sober reality.

1. The New Testament describes Christians suffering persecution and even being taken captive (Rev. 13:7, 10; cf. Mt. 10:21-22, 28; 24:9; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4; 2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4).

2. Zechariah prophesied terrible events that will occur in Jerusalem in the generation the Lord returns—when half of Jerusalem will be taken into captivity (Zech. 14:2).

²I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken... half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ³Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations... (Zech. 14:2-3)

- D. The Old Testament addresses Jewish people being scattered, persecuted, and/or taken captive at various times in history, yet particularly in context to the generation of Jesus' return (Ps. 102:20; Isa. 11:11-14, 16; 14:1-3; 19:23; 27:12-13; 40:11; 42:7, 16, 22; 45:14; 49:9-12, 21, 24-26; 60:10, 12, 14; 61:1, 5; Jer. 30:3, 8, 10, 17; 31:16, 23; Ezek. 34:27; 39:23-29; Hos. 11:11; Joel 3:1-2, 8; Amos 9:14; Mic. 2:12-13; 4:6-7; 5:6; 7:12; Zeph. 3:19-20; Zech. 9:11-12; 10:10-11; 13:8; 14:2; cf. Mt. 25:43; Lk. 21:24). Moses' prophecy of Israel being scattered and in captivity (Deut. 28:64) was partially fulfilled at the hands of Assyria (721 BC), Babylon (586 BC), and Rome (AD 70)—its ultimate fulfillment will be in the end times.
- E. The Lord is "preparing a table" for Jews fleeing from Judea in the end times—by preparing radical Egyptian and Arabs believers throughout the Middle East to reveal the love of Jesus to them.
- ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...my cup runs over. (Ps. 23:5)***
- F. God has ordained a place of provision and protection for Israel as she flees from persecution into the wilderness of the nations. The "wings of an eagle" is also the terminology used in Exodus 19.
- ¹³Now when the dragon [Satan]...persecuted the woman [the remnant of Israel]...¹⁴The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for [3½ years]...¹⁶The earth helped the woman...and swallowed up the flood [of Satan's persecution]...¹⁷The dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who...have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 12:13-17)***
- ⁴...what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (Ex. 19:4)***
- ³⁵I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples [nations, NIV], and there I will plead My case with you face to face. ³⁶Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of...Egypt, I will plead My case with you...³⁷I will bring you into the bond of the covenant... (Ezek. 20:35-37)***
- G. One task of the global body of Christ is to encourage Arab believers to stand with one another in supporting Israel as well as messianic believers to stand with one another in loving Arabs.
- H. The healing of Abraham's family will be the ***epicenter of the end-time drama***—it is the stage for the entire earth to see God's glory. Jesus prophesied there would be those who would believe they were serving God by killing Jewish people and believers in Jesus (Jn. 16:3). This hostility will be a global theater for many to see "greater love" (Jn. 15:13) and "greater works" (Jn. 14:12; cf. Mic. 7:15).
- "...the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service." (Jn. 16:2)***
- ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends... (Jn. 15:13)***
- ¹²"...the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do..." (Jn. 14:12)***
- ¹⁵"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders." (Mic. 7:15)***

¹⁴“...the days are coming...that it shall no more be said, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ ¹⁵but, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them. (Jer. 16:14-15)

III. JEWISH REFUGEES WILL RETURN TO ISRAEL FROM EGYPT AND ASSYRIA

- A. When Jesus returns, Jewish refugees who fled from the Antichrist’s reign of terror will return to Israel from Egypt and Assyria (Iraq, Jordan, Syria: Isa. 11:11, 16; 19:20; 27:12-13; Hos. 11:10-11; Mic. 7:12; Zech. 10:10-11; 14:2). Jesus will rescue Jewish captives and refugees in Egypt.

¹²The Lord will thresh from the channel of the River [Euphrates] to the Brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. ¹³In that day: the great trumpet will be blown; they [Jewish refugees] will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord...at Jerusalem. (Isa. 27:12-13)

¹¹It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt... (Isa. 11:11)

¹⁰I will bring them [Jewish refugees] back from the land of Egypt...into the land [of Israel]... (Zech. 10:10)

¹⁰They [Israel] shall walk after the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons...

¹¹shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt...from the land of Assyria... (Hos. 11:10-11)

¹²In that day they will come to you [Israel] from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain. (Mic. 7:12; ESV)

¹²It will be a day when they will come to you [Israel] from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, from Egypt even to the Euphrates, even from sea to sea and mountain to mountain. (Mic. 7:12; NAS)

IV. GOD SOVEREIGNLY DETERMINED THIS PLAN WOULD USE ABRAHAM’S FAMILY

- A. **Abraham’s first son was Ishmael:** The Angel of the Lord promised Hagar that He would multiply her descendants exceedingly through the son in her womb whom she was to name Ishmael, then was told that he would be a wild man who would have conflict with many (Gen. 16:10-12; 17:20).

¹⁰The Angel of the LORD said to her, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly...you are with child...call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. ¹²He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” (Gen. 16:10-12)

²⁰As for Ishmael, I have heard you...I have blessed him...will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. (Gen. 17:20)

1. Ishmael was Esau and Jacob’s uncle through Abraham and Hagar.
2. Esau was the uncle of and Ishmael the great uncle of Jacob’s 12 sons.

- B. **Isaac's first son was Esau:** The Lord put "two nations" in Rebecca's womb (Gen. 25:23), knowing that the sons of Esau and Jacob will be the epicenter of the end-time conflict and salvation. This was a divine setup. All this was sovereignly controlled, yet hidden in plain sight from the eyes of man.

²³The LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb; two peoples shall be separated from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23)