

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part XXVIII: Learning To Avoid Popular False Idols For Security (Isaiah 19:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. Isaiah's name means "God Is Salvation," and one key step one must take in relating to God as one's Savior is to avoid relying on popular "crutches" or idols for stability and security versus relying on the Lord for that.
- B. Egypt was a popular "crutch" idol of security for Judah, and Isaiah 19:1-15 addresses this problem as follows:

II. Learning To Avoid Popular False Idols For Security, Isaiah 19:1-15.

- A. Isaiah 19 "focuses on Egypt," with "the impending Assyrian advance throughout the whole region" serving "as a backdrop for the prophecies," Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 1065.
- B. Instead of looking to the Lord for protection against the oncoming Assyrian advance, "(s)ome people" in Judah "wanted to look to Egypt for protection," a popular false crutch, or a false idol in Isaiah's era. Ibid.
- C. Idolatry of any kind in any era is intolerable to God (1 John 5:21 with Exodus 20:1-3), so Isaiah 19:1-15 predicts God's coming destruction on Egypt, a destruction that would undermine the very attributes of stability and security in Egypt that the people of Judah sought to where Egypt would lose its appeal as a false idol:
 - 1. First, God would ride on a swift cloud, judging Egypt's false gods, Isaiah 19:1. In pagan Canaan, Baal was the god who produced rain and fertility, but since Israel's God is the **true** "Giver of rain . . . and fertility" (Ibid., p. 1066), all the gods of Egypt would not be able to save her from the Lord's judgment on its loss of water and fertility, to the demoralizing of Egypt and the destabilizing of its society. [The reference to Baal is important to Judah, for they were supposed to learn to trust God versus Baal for rain once they entered Canaan in contrast to their past comfort of relying on the steady flow of the Nile in Egypt, Deut. 11:8-17.]
 - 2. Second, Egypt would face civil war, no longer to be viewed as a place of stability for Judah's people or for any other people who might want to rely upon that land or to relocate there for security, Isaiah 19:2.
 - 3. Third, the Egyptians would become demoralized, their counsel being confounded as they looked in futility to spiritists, idols, mediums and necromancers, Isaiah 19:3 ESV.
 - 4. Fourth, where Egypt had once been a self-serving taskmaster especially in Israel's past years of bondage there, God would hand over the Egyptians themselves to be dominated by the fierce taskmaster of Assyria's king, thereby obliterating the nation as a haven of security for outside people groups, Isaiah 19:4.
 - 5. Fifth, Isaiah predicted that Egypt would suffer a bad drought though for centuries it had known no water shortage due to the steady water supply of the Nile River. Egypt's fishermen, its workers in combed flax and its weavers of white cotton who produced their food and goods as a result of the Nile's supply, those tradesmen once seen as economic pillars in Egyptian society, would be materially crushed, and all who worked for pay in their trades would grieve over their lack of income, Isaiah 19:5-10 ESV.
 - 6. Sixth, though at one time Zoan had been Egypt's capital city (v. 13a) and Memphis on the Nile about 20 miles north of Cairo had been Egypt's first capital of a united Egypt (v. 13b; Ibid.), the leaders who had provided the nation centuries of stability in giving it a rich national heritage would become foolish and deluded, the cause of the nation's final staggering in its instability and loss of its heritage, Isaiah 19:13.
 - 7. Seventh, "(t)he internationally famous wise men of Egypt would be unable to avert disaster" (Isaiah 19:11-14; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Isa. 19:11-14). Even those who were once the "cornerstones" of Egypt's tribes (v. 13 ESV) would make the nation stagger since the Lord would make Egypt stagger in her deeds much like a helpless drunk staggers (v. 14). There would thus be a complete weakening of Egyptian society so that neither Egypt's leaders ("head" and "palm branch") nor its people ("tail" and "reed") would be able to hold back God's judgment of the Assyrian invasion, Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.; Isaiah 19:15 ESV.

Lesson: *God announced that the land of Egypt that some in Judah sought for security to offset Assyria's advance would be invaded by Assyria so that all the stability Egypt had once offered would be undone in that judgment so that Judah's people might learn to shift from trusting in Egypt for security and instead rely on the Lord.*

Application: *(1) If we look to some popular "crutch" idol for stability and security in place of God, know that it displeases the Lord, and that He will even undermine that idol that we might look to Him instead. (2) If we currently reel from the loss of some entity to which we once looked for stability or security, we must examine our hearts to see if we have made it a "crutch" idol that God wanted to judge that we might turn back to rely on Him.*