

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 39

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Thirty-Nine

JUDGMENT ON EGYPT PART I

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Isaiah 19:1–4

The burden of Egypt. Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. ²And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. ³And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmors, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. ⁴And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts (ASV, 1901).

INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew word Egypt is *Mitzraim*, and it was called that after the second son of Ham, Noah's son who was the grandson of Noah. Ham sinned greatly against his father Noah and this legacy continues to the Egyptians. The Egyptians have carried out many persecutions upon Israel as well as influencing them into idol worship. There have been a number of Egyptian persecutions of Israel from their time in Egypt until the present time. There are two principal reasons for the Egyptian persecution and also the enslavement of Israel. The first is the refinement that God desired to accomplish in His children Israel. The second is to allow the Amorites a chance to turn from their sins. After the Exodus God did not want the Jews to enter Canaan with the "extremely" sinful Amorites still there.¹

The first persecution was initially announced in approximately 2067 B.C. within the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 15:13-16

¹³And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; ¹⁴and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. ¹⁵But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full (ASV, 1901).

¹ Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Reprint Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002, 61.

God wanted the Hebrews to be holy. He wanted them to imitate Him in their thoughts and behavior. He wanted them to be holy as He is holy. The Bible teaches that the way to holiness is refinement through suffering (Deuteronomy 8:5; Job 5:17–18; Job 36:8–12; Isaiah 48:10; etc.).

So, God wanted the Jews to become holy through suffering. He put them into the cauldron of persecution in Egypt so that they would be refined. The following verse shows that God intends to refine and, or purify the Jews.

Daniel 12:10

¹⁰Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand (ASV, 1901).

Those whom God has chosen to understand Him, in other words, those who are wise will be purged and made holy. As we move through the text of this chapter we see that God has related to the world through the prophet Isaiah what the Egyptians did to the Jews over time and what His program is for them prior to and in the Messianic Kingdom. As we move through this chapter we will see the Egyptian persecution of Israel over time.

The Jews were actually afflicted in Egypt for 400 years. (Genesis 15:13) Other verses say 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41 & Galatians 3:17). This is not a contradiction since their entire time in the land was not under affliction. When they went into Egypt it was under Joseph, who treated them well.

Genesis Chapter 37 begins the story of Joseph, which continues for fourteen chapters. Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus in many ways, although he is not specifically mentioned in Scripture as a Type of Christ. However, the many analogies are significant. Both were objects of their father's love Both were hated by their brothers. Their brethren rejected the superior claims of both. The brethren of both conspired to slay them. Each became a blessing among the Gentiles and gained a bride. Joseph reconciled his brethren to himself and exalted them, so it will be with Christ and His Jewish brethren.

Joseph is hated by his brothers and asked by his father Israel to watch over them. Further, he is loved by Israel more than his siblings. They hate him so much that they sell him into slavery. They would have killed him had not Reuben and Judah intervened to stop the killing. Joseph was brought down to Egypt during the Middle Kingdom Age. It was a powerful and unified land. It had peace, effective government and general prosperity. Potiphar, captain of the guard was the chief executioner for Pharaoh Sesostris II (1897-1879 B.C.). Some think that Joseph was earlier than that at about 1910 B.C. Joseph can be compared to Daniel in that they both are praised in Scripture as being close to God and blameless. They both rose to high governmental positions of prominence during captivity. These two are the only people (excluding the prophets) in Scripture except the Lord Jesus of whom no evil is spoken.

God tested Joseph with Potiphar's wife to see if he was going to be obedient. If one is to be blessed one MUST obey the Lord. Remember that faith leads to obedience, which results in

blessing. If one is to fulfill God's plan then he cannot sin against the God that will bring it about. She attempts to have an adulterous relationship with Joseph and he rejects her advances and leaves the house. As he is leaving she grabs his garment ripping it off him which he leaves there.

Joseph's clothing is used to bring about a false charge against him. Here he had served faithfully and, he ended up in bondage. God sometimes delays his blessings. They might be disguised well. Our role is to remain faithful and wait on the Lord.

The circumstantial evidence was incriminating. Potiphar was enraged but, he must have had some questions regarding the testimony of his wife. She directed her anger at Potiphar. Potiphar took Joseph to prison. He did not kill him. Joseph was a faithful servant of God. He remained loyal to God rather than yield to temptation. Wise people know that allegiance to God is the first requirement to success in our lives.

Pharaoh had two dreams which caused him great distress, especially since none of the wise men of Egypt could explain them. God used an Israelite slave, Joseph, to confound the wisdom of Egypt. Joseph is brought out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's two dreams. One dream was a prophecy of Egypt having seven years of an excellent economy and the other prophesying seven years of famine.

Joseph declared to Pharaoh that the interpretation of the dream was with God alone. Joseph explained that because the dream was in two versions it signified that it was of God and would be carried out soon.

Joseph advised Pharaoh to choose a wise man who would oversee storing 20 percent of the grain during each of the seven years of plenty to use during the seven years of famine. Wise planning ahead is a basic principle of practical living.

Joseph had been faithful over the little things. Now he would become ruler over Egypt second only to Pharaoh. Because the famine extended to the land of Canaan the rest of Joseph's family including Israel, his father came to Egypt for food.

The Lord placed Joseph in Egypt to work out part of His overall plan. Joseph did not blame his brothers for selling him into slavery. They lived for quite a while in peace and prosperity in Egypt. Joseph was in complete and total control of Egypt. Josephus the Jewish historian tells us that the Jews built pyramids and increased the waterways in the Delta region during the 400 years.² Further the Hyksos, who were the progeny of Shem, as were the Jews, were there during the same time period as Joseph. The Hyksos were most likely on the throne at the time of Joseph and during the 16th and 17th Dynasties. Therefore, this is the probably reason that the Jews received favorable treatment during Joseph's reign.

Genesis 50:20

² Josephus, Flavius, Whiston, William translator *The Works of Josephus*, Published by Hendrickson MA, 1987. Pg. 60

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; [but] God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as [it is] this day, to save much people alive (KJV).

Genesis 45:8

So now [it was] not you [that] sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt (KJV).

EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND

The word dynasty means a house or rule. The 16th and 17th Dynasties were the Hyksos. They were Semitic (sons of Shem) and not Hamites (sons of Ham) as were the Egyptians. The Hyksos became weak and the Egyptians became stronger. The pharaoh that actually expelled the Hyksos was Ahmose.

Ahmose (1617-1546 B.C.)

With this expulsion he established the 18th Dynasty. The name Mose was a common Egyptian name. Ahmose campaigned into Canaan to destroy the Hyksos and eventually succeeded. Scripture says that there arose up a new King that knew not Joseph. (Exodus 1:8) This was because there was a change in dynasty. Acts 7:20-22 is part of Stephens's historical declaration in front of the Sanhedrin and he says that *another* king arose in Egypt. The Greeks have two words for *another*. One is Allos (str. 243), which means another of the same. The second one is Heteros (str. 2088) which means another "kind.") So, Ahmose was not A Semite but a Hamite. Ahmose expelled the Hyksos and the Jews were enslaved. Here the bondage begins.

Amenhotep I (1546-1526 B.C.)

He was the son of Ahmose who raided Canaan and had no children. This was the Pharaoh of the genocide. (Exodus 1:15)

Thutmose I (1526-1512 B.C.)

He was the son-in-law of Ahmose and assumed the throne because Thutmose I had no offspring. He married two times and had a child by each marriage. His first wife gave him a daughter, Hatshepsut. She is also pharaoh's daughter in (Exodus 2:5). His second wife gave him a son, Thutmose II. In 1525 B.C. she adopts Moses and she gives him the Egyptian name of Moishe a name that was typical of the 18th Dynasty. The prefix of their names had the beginning of their god's names. Moses might have had one of these too. When he repudiated the Egyptians he probably dropped the first part of the name so he would not be called after an Egyptian deity.

Thutmose II (1512-1504 B.C.)

He died early after only an eight-year reign. Hatshepsut was his half-sister. Moses was raised during his reign in the Royal Court.

Thutmose III (1504-1447 B.C.)

He was very young when Thutmose II died so Hatshepsut controlled the throne. He was her nephew and later married her daughter. He hated Hatshepsut with a passion and when she died in 1487 B.C. he tried to erase her memory by smashing statues and smearing stone inscriptions with plaster. Anyone connected with her was a product of his wrath and he would try to execute him or her. He made raids into Canaan and put the Canaanites under Egyptian control. He was the pharaoh of the oppression. As long as Hatshepsut was alive and in control of the throne Moses was safe. After she died Moses had to leave. We can see why Moses had to flee Egypt after killing the Egyptian. If Hatshepsut were alive she would have protected him since a member of the house of pharaoh would have been exempt from any retribution for killing an Egyptian.

Hatshepsut (1504-1487)

Reigned while Thutmose was very young but still on the throne. She was the real power in the throne. She co-reigned with Thutmose III. Moses was in Midian for 40 years after the death of Hatshepsut. This is the exact period of the remainder of Thutmose III reign after Hatshepsut's death.

Amenhotep II (1447-1425 B.C.)

He was the son of Thutmose III and he too made raids into Canaan. He is the pharaoh of the Exodus (Exodus 3:10) and his first-born son was killed during the plague of the Passover.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE EXODUS

- 1) The God who is there. (Exodus 3:14) The Bible does not try and prove God it assumes He is here and assumes this truthfulness in this book.
- 2) The God who controls history. (Exodus 4:21; Proverbs 21:1)
- 3) The God who is holy. (Exodus 3:5) The holiness of god is brought out in Exodus and the Jews will be punished severely because they violate His righteousness standard.
- 4) The God who remembers. (Exodus 2:24; 3:6; 3:16) He made commitments and will keep them regardless of the human reckoning of time. (II Peter 3:4) He keeps them to the very letter. We don't need to symbolize or allegorize away His covenants and promises. What God has said He will do will surely be done in His own time. He is long suffering.
- 5) The God who works and acts in salvation. (Exodus 3:3-9) This is sometimes physical and sometimes spiritual and often both. It is important to recognize the difference between the two in Scripture. We must not attribute the spiritual for the physical.
- 6) The God who speaks. (Exodus 3:4-22; Amos 3:7) He has made known to us His Word in written form as He made men write what He wanted to convey to us.
- 7) The God who acts in judgment. (Exodus 3:20; 4:22) He is long suffering (He waited 400 years) and no body who receives His judgment is undeserving of it. Repentance is always available but it must be genuine, as He has written. (II Corinthians 7:9-11)
- 8) The God whose anger may be averted by proper intercession. (Exodus 32:9-14)
- 9) The God who transcends. (Exodus 33:20) We can't see Him in all His full glory or we would perish. He makes His presence known and gives us manifestations of Himself.

- 10) The God who lives among His people. (Exodus 29:45) The whole reason for the tabernacle was for the Lord to have a presence to meet with His people. We now have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 11) The God of Laws. (Exodus 20-23) God is not haphazard. He is very precise. Casual worship is not acceptable to Him and the concept that all roads lead to heaven is a false assertion. In order to obtain God's righteousness certain laws must be kept. These laws are not for salvation because that is by grace alone through faith alone. If we love Him we will keep His commandments.

JUDGMENT UPON EGYPT

Isaiah 19:1

The burden of Egypt. Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it (ASV, 1901).

Here God begins to express a large burden (Hebrew Massa, judgment) upon the country of Egypt. When it happens it will be swiftly accomplished. God, being about to visit Egypt with a judgment of extreme severity, is represented as entering the land in person. *The idols of Egypt shall tremble.* The only people group the Lord used to come against the gods of their enemies in ancient times were the Assyrians. They always humbled the gods of the hostile countries. We have Asshur-bani-pal's first victory over Tirhakah immediately followed by the presentation to him in his camp of Egyptian deities³ *i.e.* of their images. These were probably taken to Nineveh, or else destroyed. At a later date, the same monarch deprived an Egyptian temple of two of its sacred obelisks⁴. *The heart of Egypt shall melt* (Isaiah 13:7; Psalm 22:14). Since the Egyptians worshipped their idols and false gods as if they truly existed and would help them, the Assyrian assault on them brought extreme grief upon them when in fact they could do them no good.

Isaiah 19:2

²And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom (ASV, 1901).

And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians. This text is saying that God will cause a civil war between the Egyptians. This is one way in which he brings chaos to bear on situations in which He is bringing a Divine correction. The disintegration of Egypt started about 760–750 B.C., towards the close of the twenty-second dynasty. About 735 B.C. a struggle began between Piankhi, King of Upper Egypt, and Tafnekht, King of Sais and Memphis, in which the other princes took different sides. Ten or twelve years later there was a struggle between Bocchoris and Sabaco. From this time onwards, until Psamatik I re-established the unity of Egypt (about 650 B.C.), the country was always more or less divided, and on the onset of any crisis the princes were apt to make war one upon another. *Kingdom against kingdom.* During the period of

³ Smith, George, *History of Assurbanipal*, Published by Williams and Norgate, London 1871, Pg. 20.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 54, ll. 4, 5

disintegration, the title of “king” was assumed by most of the petty princes, though they were little more than chiefs of cities.⁵ ⁶ The terms *city against city* and *kingdom against kingdom* are Hebrew idioms. This idiom, taken in the Jewish context of the day when it was spoken, points to a total conflict of the area in view. In this case it is referencing Egypt. It is also found in II Chronicles 17:1–7 where the mid-east is in view. Jesus utilized this idiom to refer to the totality of the Tribulation which will cover the entire earth (Matthew 24:8). In Jesus’ day, the expression of *nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom* was a Jewish idiom of a world war preceding the coming of the Messiah. The *Bereshit Rabbah*¹ states:

If you shall see kingdoms rising against each other in turn, then give heed and note the footsteps of the Messiah.

Isaiah 19:3

³And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards (ASV, 1901).

They shall seek to the idols. The Egyptians believed like many people, who do not know God that their gods gave them messages. Menephtah claims to have been warned by Phthah, the god of Memphis, not to take the field in person against the Libyans when they invaded the Delta, but to leave the task of contending with them to his generals.⁷ Herodotus speaks of there being several well-known oracular shrines in Egypt, the most trustworthy being that of Maut, at the city which he calls Buto.⁸

They shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. Classes of men corresponding to the “magicians” and “wise men” of earlier times (Genesis 41:8). What amount of skill and power the Egyptian magicians possessed is doubtful. Some believe them to have been in actual communication with the unseen world, and to have worked their wonders by the assistance of evil spirits. However, most view them as simply persons who had a special knowledge who used this knowledge to impress men with a belief in their supernatural power. The words used to express “magicians” and “enchantments” support this view. The magicians are called *khākāmim*, “wise men,” “men educated in human and divine wisdom.” *mēkashshēphim*, “charmers,” “mutterers of magic words” and *khartummim*, which is thought to mean either “sacred scribes” or “bearers of sacred words.” The word translated “enchantments” is *lēhētīm*, which means “secret” or “hidden arts. It is probable that the Egyptian “magicians” of this time were jugglers of a high class, well skilled in serpent-charming or selling of snake oil and other kindred arts, but not possessed of any supernatural powers.

⁵ Ibid pp. 20–22

⁶ Wright, Frederick B, *Records of the Past*, Published by Records of the Past, Washington D.C. Vol II pg. 100

¹ Translated by Freedman, H. *The Midrash Rabbah Genesis*, Published by The Soncino Press, London. XLII:4

⁷ Brugsch, H, *History of Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, Published by John Murray, London 1987 vol. ii. p. 119

⁸ Herodotus, translated by Aubrey de Selincourt *The Histories*, Published by The Easton Press, Connecticut 1954, ii. 152; comp. Ch. 111

Isaiah 19:4

⁴And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts (ASV, 1901).

The particular individual associated with this prophecy is not clearly known. It is most probable Esarhaddon the Assyrian. Esarhaddon, soon after his accession, cut off the heads of Abdi-Milkut, King of Sidon, and of Sanduarri, King of Kundi (modern Pakistan), and hung them round the necks of two of their chief officers.⁹ He was succeeded by Ashurbanipal who completed the conquest. In an expedition which he made into Arabia, he had eight of the sovereigns, two of them being women killed.¹⁰ On conquering Egypt, he treated it with extreme severity (Cir. 669 B.C.). Not only did he divide up the country into twenty governments, but he changed the names of the towns, and assigned to his twenty governors, as their main duty, that they were “to slay, plunder, and spoil” their subjects¹¹ He can be thought as one who qualifies as the first to hold the title of *a cruel lord; and a fierce king*.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE WOE TO EGYPT PT. II

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⁹Smith, G, *Assyrian Eponym Canon*, Published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, London 1875 pp. 137–139).

¹⁰ Wright, Frederick B, *Records of the Past*, Published by Records of the Past, Washington D.C. Vol III pg. 107, 107

¹¹ Smith, George, *History of Assurbanipal*, Published by Williams and Norgate, London 1871, p. 37, l. 7;