

Isaiah 19-20:1-6

“Devastated, Disoriented, Delivered”

We’ve been on a “rinse & repeat” cycle for a few weeks (with a couple more to go). God simply making it clear that no nation, no people, no one will be exempt from judgment.

It’s interesting to me that so many people have this mentality that if they don’t believe something, then it follows suit that it’s not true. (So we have these new found phrases, “speak *your* truth”, “what’s *your* truth”, as if truth is something that can be adjusted to fit personal perspective.) Evidently, we (as a society) need a refresher course in the fact that truth isn’t relative, it’s not subjective (subject to individual opinion). Truth is *objective*. Meaning it’s unbiased, it’s impartial, it’s factual. As the saying goes, there are 2 sides to every story, but there’s only 1 side to the facts. Simply not believing something doesn’t remove us from the reality that it bears upon us.

It's like trying to deny the truth of gravity, or velocity. You don't have to believe that gravity is real, but if you step off a building, you're hitting the ground, nonetheless. You don't have to believe in velocity, but if you hit a wall going 100 mph, it's going to kill you, doesn't matter if you “believe” it or not...

So to w/the truth of God’s word. & The fact that we will all be subject to His judgment. Either we bear it, or we stand (by faith) in *Christ* who bore it for us. He is our refuge & our righteousness before God.*

But when God takes the time to isolate & inform nation after nation, the point becomes pretty clear. There are none who are exempt from being accountable to Him. Not only ultimately/eternally, but presently, historically, God will deal w/societies right where they’re at.

Some of the fingerprints of the judgment of God upon a nation or society include (but are not limited to) toppling idolatry, destroying the economy, leadership moving foolishly & acting in incompetency... W/that, we turn our attention to Egypt.

Vs 1-4

I’ll say it again. It never ceases to amaze me how right on time God’s word is & how these passages we’ve been studying are so incredibly relevant to our nation currently... It’s almost like history moves in cycles & one generation never really learns the lessons from the previous... It’s almost like though times/cultures may change, the human heart remains the same...

It's almost exactly like the Bible says... ☺ *“That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after.”¹*

But Ch 19 of the book of Isaiah is really quite fascinating. Because in it the Lord speaks *against* Egypt & *for* Egypt. He says that He will *devastate* Egypt, He will *disorient* Egypt, & He will *deliver* Egypt.

& You don't have to be a history buff to know that Egypt (in the ancient world) was a significant empire on the world stage. One of the oldest nations in the world... In fact, the nation of Israel was essentially born in/out of Egypt. Jacob went into Egypt w/about 70 total members in his family & 400 yrs later came out w/somewhere to the tune of 2 million people (the *nation* of Israel). But Egypt was a well-established nation long before that... Abraham had fled to & had dealings w/Egypt.

& Being situated directly south of Israel, they had constant dealings w/one another. At times Egypt was an enemy of Israel, other times Egypt would be a refuge for Israel, sometimes they would offer tempting but ungodly alliances to Israel. But here in Ch 19, God speaks to exactly how He is going to (both) devastate & deliver Egypt.

The 1st thing He brings into focus for us is the idolatry of Egypt, & the fact that He was going to demonstrate the utter powerlessness & render as nothing the (*g*)ods of Egypt. – I'm not sure there's a nation historically that was more steeped in idolatry than was the nation of Egypt (perhaps Babylon seeing as how Babel was essentially the seat of idolatry). But the Egyptians effectively deified just about every kind of creature there was. You see it in Egyptian hieroglyphics. They worshiped dogs/cats, alligators, scarabs (beetles of sorts), hippos, fish... various birds. They had gods for virtually ever conceivable scenario. Over 2,000 gods in the Egyptian pantheon. They worshiped snakes, frogs, lizards... on & on it goes.

You could accurately apply Rom 1:22-25 right over the top of the history of ancient Egypt. *“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ec 1:9-11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”²

God was about to put out on display that the things they worshiped as gods weren’t gods at all & were absolutely powerless to help them.

*Listen, God wants the world to know that there’s only 1 God & He’s the *only* God w/whom we have to do. & He has absolutely no problem “knocking down” or showing the ineptness of those things that we’ve elevated in our hearts to the place where He belongs in our lives... If you’re looking *to*, leaning *on*, trusting *in* anyone/anything other than the J.C. to be your help/strength in time of need, don’t be surprised when things come to such a place of devastation in your life that you’re forced to concede that, that *person*, that *program*, that *place* is truly powerless to solve your problems... God loves you enough to bring you to the end of hoping *in* or looking *to* anyone or anything other than Him. – It’s in Christ that we find our strength, it’s in Christ that we find our peace, we find our comfort, our help, our healing & our hope. He’s the One we look *to* & trust *in* to meet our every need... As Paul told the Colossians, *“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”^{3*}*

Egypt was elevating about everything to the status that only God belongs in. He was going to address that. & As you well know, it wouldn’t be the 1st time He did! Believe me when I tell you that when God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt through that series of 10 plagues, they weren’t random plagues just kind of tossed out there. They were specific attacks upon various gods that Egypt worshiped.

The god “Hapi” was the personification, the spirit of the Nile, Khnum, was the guardian of the Nile & Osiris was believed to have the Nile as his bloodstream. God knocked each of them down when He turned the waters of the Nile to blood.

& Such was the case w/each plague, the frogs, the plague upon the livestock, the boils, the hail, the lice, the swarms of insects/locusts. “Ra” the sun god was shown to be powerless through the 3 days of darkness... Each plague (the death of the 1st born) was God waging war & showing the gods of Egypt as powerless to protect them. Here, God says He’s going to do it again...

*What else will He do? “I will set Egyptians against Egyptians.” Wait.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 1:22–25]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Col 2:9–10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Civil unrest, a nation divided against itself can be a sign of God's judgment upon it? You bet it can. History records well, the division of the Egyptian dynasty & the civil wars that would break out between them.

"The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst". Translation? God's going to knock the wind out of Egypt as a nation. "I will destroy their counsel... they will consult idols, charmers, mediums & sorcerers." We've spoken on this before & we'll see it again before the chapter is finished. When a nation is under the judgment of God, it's not uncommon that He will "remove" or "destroy" sound counsel & rather than wise rulers, foolish leaders are put in place. Rather than making solid decisions they surround themselves w/incompetent individuals (he mentions charmers/mediums & such) to counsel them & have positions of authority along w/them. *

Egypt was renowned for its class of wisemen (1 Kings 4:30). But God was going to dumbfound them, leave them unable to cope w/the judgment that would befall them... & "Give them into the hand of a cruel master to rule over them..." Probably the king of Assyria being in view. But here's another fingerprint of God's judgment upon a nation. #1 He'll remove competent leaders (I will destroy their counsel). #2 He will place over them cruel & oppressive leaders that leave the nation languishing in oppression/subjugation & harassment. (You mean like shutting down an entire economy, making it a crime to open your business so as to feed your family & mandating various measures that further divide society?) Something like that... ☺

Speaking of shutting down & destroying the economy, that's *another* sign of God's judgment upon a nation. Notice.

Vs 5-10

In that day Egypt's entire economy revolved around the Nile River. It would overflow its banks on an annual basis. The waters were like a "sea" (that's the reference in Vs 5 where it reads that the "sea" will fail), they would overflow the riverbanks, providing irreplaceable nutrients through silt deposits in the surrounding soil for countless 1,000s of acres (the Nile is over 4,000 miles long). *If the banks didn't overflow & drought ensued, the results would be devastating to the entire nation. Not only agriculturally (causing famine), but everything else was built around the Nile. The fishing industry was dependent upon the Nile, cloth manufacturing depended upon the flax plants that grew from the waters of the Nile.* "All who make wages will be troubled of soul." -- Many people point to the Aswan Dam (built in Egypt in 1970) as a modern fulfillment of this.

Because it stopped the annual flooding, it stopped the spreading of the nutrient rich silt over the fields, there's been saltwater intrusion in farming areas in that region, the fishing industry has suffered... It's caused an ecological nightmare. -- God said it would happen...

Vs 11-15

*I want you to hear this. God toppled their *idolatry* (nothing they turned to could help them), He devastated their *economy*, & in the midst of it all, the leadership acted foolishly, making decisions from incompetency... Sound familiar?

He not only gave them cruel/oppressive leaders, He surrounded those leaders w/foolish counselors (w/warped, distorted, perverse perspectives). "Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now & let them know what the Lord of hosts has purposed against Egypt." In other words, if you want true wisdom, it's found in the word of God. It's knowing what the Lord of hosts has purposed. – True wisdom isn't knowing all kinds of facts or having crafty strategies. People can be incredibly intelligent, & still be incredibly intelligent fools. – The Bible says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*"⁴ Wisdom is rooted in the fear of God, that's where it *begins*... You can get a lot of advice from a lot of sources, & most of it isn't good. In fact, a lot of it can be counterproductive & destructive toward your life...

That's why it's so critical that you get your counsel from the right resource (the Word of God). The Bible says, "*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*"⁵ If you're making your life decisions based upon what people think as opposed to what God's Word says... I'm telling you, you're destined for disaster. *

Vs 16-17

It's a pretty incredible statement to say that Judah would be a terror to Egypt. How many 1,000's of years was Judah submissively in the shadow of the Egyptian Empire...

But today that's not the case is it? If Egypt & Israel were to go to war today, you better place your money on Israel...

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Pr 9:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 1:1-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now. One of the things that God is demonstrating to Egypt in all of this is that “superpower” or not, they have no control over their future. God is in control... That’s not a bad thing. In fact it’s a *good* thing to come to a place of humility, to recognize their own *inability* to save themselves & submit themselves to God... Perhaps they’ve been devastated, they’re disoriented, now they’re ripe for *deliverance*.

Vs 18

The phrase, “in that day” points us to the future. I believe that Isaiah just telescoped us prophetically all the way into the Millennial reign of Christ. When he speaks of “the language of Canaan” it’s a reference to the Hebrew language. It’s not saying that Egypt will speak only Hebrew, but it’ll be a common language of the nation. The reference to the 5 cities seems to point us to the nation in general. The idea is, “It’ll be like this all over the place in Egypt. They’ll swear by the name of the Lord of Hosts!”

In other words, the day is coming when Egypt won’t be an idolatrous nation, won’t be an Islamic nation, they’ll follow after the 1 true God, they’ll turn to J.C.

This mention of the “City of destruction” is probably a mistranslation, better translated, “City of the Sun” which was a major capital city of ancient Egypt, Heliopolis. Today, it’s merged w/Cairo.

Vs 19-22

*I’m so glad that God loves us enough to strike us, that He might heal us... (Sounds strange, doesn’t it?) He will reduce our lives to nothing (if that’s what it takes) that we might cry out to Him (because of the oppression & misery) & then He sends us a Savior, a Mighty One, & He delivers us... We place a lot of weight in this life (& that’s ok, it’s all we know). But God is way more concerned w/our *eternal* well-being. -- *Because God loves you, He’s willing to bring you low in this life, that you might cry out to Him & He will gift you w/eternal life.*

I love how this passage emphasizes the greatness of the Savior. It’s what we need, we need a *great* Savior, a Deliverer who is *mighty* to save. Because my *great* sin, demands a *great* Savior. No average, ordinary, run of the mill Savior would do ☺... A Mighty One (who has conquered both sin/death) has delivered us, even J.C. the Righteous One. *

Now, there has been nuances of this fulfilled in Egypt’s history, but again, ultimately, we’re looking into the Millennial reign of Christ here. There will be a pillar at the border of Egypt that testifies that they’re a nation that honors the Lord. There will be an altar in the midst of the land where memorial sacrifices will be performed honoring the work of the cross of J.C.

God will bring healing/hope to Egypt.

Now, even as believers, God will at times allow difficult times in our lives. & I'm not saying that every instance is because something is amiss in your life (sometimes the enemy oppresses us because things are *right* in our lives). **But I always think it's good to take inventory & ask the Lord, is there something in my life that needs dealt with, repented of or removed. Is there something I've been reluctant or unwilling to deal with? If so God would have us repent & return to Him that He might heal us...**

Vs 23-25

Ladies and Gentlemen: this is an *incredible* prophecy. Think of all the tension in the Middle East today. Ancient Assyria is located in modern day Iraq. Can you envision Egypt, Iraq & Israel all trading/traveling together like they're the 3 amigos? ☺ God says it's going to happen! We're looking here at an *amazing work of redemption!* & **It shows us that the heart of God has always been to extend salvation to *all* the nations... That He desires all men everywhere to repent & to come to the knowledge of the truth. & The Prince of peace will bring true peace upon the earth... I'm telling you, true peace isn't found in a place, or a program, prosperity or poverty, it's found in a Person... The Person of J.C.**

God calls Egypt, "My people." Assyria, He calls, "The work of My hands." But who is Israel? "My inheritance." Every now & then you'll hear of an amazing *inheritance* that has radically enriched someone's life. People get excited about *inheritances*. You know what God gets excited about, do you know what *His* inheritance is? You... In Eph 1:18 Paul calls you, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance." Let that bless your socks off today ☺. God's looking forward to receiving *you* (His inheritance).

Ch 20

Vs 1-2

To be brief. Ashdod was actually a Philistine city & God used them as an object lesson for Israel... We know exactly when this happened, secular history records it, it was 711 B.C. when Assyria conquered this Philistine stronghold of a city.

When that happened God told Isaiah, "Take off your sackcloth & walk naked before the people." ... Now, you shouldn't think completely nude, but no outer garment. Kind of like walking around in his underwear. Not, completely morally unacceptable, but certainly strange & uncomfortable to be around... As for the sackcloth, it was basically camels hide turned w/the hair in toward the body, it was uncomfortable to say the least.

It was common for prophets to dress like that as a sign of mourning or affliction. But God says, “Isaiah, take that off & walk around Jerusalem essentially naked.” & He did. The point wasn’t nakedness (definitely nothing sexy), it was abject poverty, destitution & total humiliation as an illustration to the nation.

Vs 3-4

Did Isaiah dress like a P.O.W for 3 straight yrs? Maybe. But not necessarily. He may’ve walked around the city of Jerusalem once a day in this fashion for 3 yrs or something like that. But the tangible warning to Judah was, “Don’t align yourself w/Egypt or Ethiopia against Assyria, because they’re going to be taken captive & led off in shame...”

*Quick question. Can people see God’s word active in your life? I’m not suggesting that you take off your clothes & walk around in your underwear 😊. But — are there tangible elements that set you apart? It’s one thing to give people the right *words*, it’s another to show people the right *way*... to be a *doer* of the word of God. **People should see Jesus in our lives. Isaiah was willing to do whatever took for people to get the message. You & me, we need to be willing to do whatever it takes that people might understand the message of the word of God & the hope of the gospel of J.C.**

“People might think I’m a fool!” I doubt that Isaiah looked like Mr. Cool walking around... he didn’t care (& neither should we). – I’m so glad that Jesus was willing to suffer humiliation for my sake. Am I willing to be counted a fool for His sake? Think about that...*

Vs 5-6 Close

Let me just say this. Whenever you place your hope, your expectation in anything or anyone other than the Lord, you’ll only be let down, disappointed & left in dismay.

Place your hope, your glory, your expectation in the Lord J.C. Your deliverance, your assurance, your salvation is in Him alone & having begun a good work in you... He will be faithful to complete it until the day you see Him face to face... then, you will be like Him for you will see Him as He is...

Prayer Points:

God, we’re grateful for Your word. Your faithfulness to redirect our focus again & again so that we place our hope & our trust in You alone. We thank You Jesus that You are our Deliverer, Mighty to save, may we be doers of Your word.

Where sin abounds, grace abounds still more. Jesus is Mighty to save, He breaks chains, sets captives free & gifts those who believe on Him w/eternal life. Turn from your sin, trust in Him today.