

# CHAPTER 19

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 19

This chapter contains prophecies of various calamities that should come upon Egypt in a short time, and of the conversion of many of them to Christ in Gospel times. The calamities are many; the Lord's coming unto them, which their gods cannot prevent, nor stand before, nor save them, and at which the hearts of the Egyptians are dispirited, (<sup><23101></sup>Isaiah 19:1) civil wars among themselves, (<sup><23102></sup>Isaiah 19:2) want of counsel, which sends them to idols and wizards, but in vain, (<sup><23103></sup>Isaiah 19:3) subjection to a cruel lord, (<sup><23104></sup>Isaiah 19:4) drying up of their rivers and waters, so that the paper reeds wither, and fishes die; and hence no business for fishermen, nor for workers in flax, or weavers of nets, (<sup><23105></sup>Isaiah 19:5-10,15) the stupidity of their princes and wise counsellors, given up by the Lord to a perverse spirit, so that they concerted wrong measures, and deceived the people, (<sup><231011></sup>Isaiah 19:11-14) a general consternation among them, because of the hand and counsel of the Lord; and because of the Lord's people, the Jews, who were a terror to them, (<sup><231016></sup>Isaiah 19:16,17) and then follows the prophecy of their conversion in later times, which is signified by their speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing to the Lord, (<sup><231018></sup>Isaiah 19:18) by their erecting an altar, and a pillar to the Lord, which should be a sign and witness to him; and by their crying to him, and his sending them a Saviour, and a great one, (<sup><231019></sup>Isaiah 19:19,20) by his being known unto them, by their offering sacrifice to him, and by his smiting and healing them (<sup><231021></sup>Isaiah 19:21,22) and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy of that harmony, and agreement, and fellowship, that shall be between Jew and Gentile, between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel; and that the blessing of God should be upon them all, (<sup><231023></sup>Isaiah 19:23-25).

**Ver. 1.** *The burden of Egypt;* &c.] Or a prophecy concerning Egypt, as the Arabic version; a very grievous one, declaring many calamities that should come upon them. The Targum is,

“the burden of the cup of cursing, to make the Egyptians drink.”

The people of the Jews reposed great confidence in the Egyptians their allies; wherefore, in order to break this confidence, it was necessary they should be acquainted with the destruction that was coming upon them, which is the design of this prophecy.

*Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud:* or a “light” one<sup>f358</sup> denoting the speed with which he came, he would come quickly, light clouds move swiftly; the suddenness and unexpectedness of his coming, clouds being rarely seen in Egypt, where was no rain; and the irresistible power with which he would come, for who or what can stop the clouds of heaven? not anything on earth, not armies, nor castles, and fortified places. The Lord is represented as riding in great state and majesty, as a general at the head of his army against his enemies; or as a judge going to try and condemn criminals; he rides upon the heavens, walks on the wings of the wind, and the clouds are his chariot, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 68:4,33 104:3) so Christ is represented as coming in the clouds of heaven, and as sitting on a white cloud, when he shall come to judge the world, (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 1:7 14:14) though these words are not to be understood of that coming of his; and much less of his first coming in the flesh, to which they are weakly applied by Jerom and others; who, by the light cloud, understand the Virgin Mary, as the Christians of Syria; or the human nature of Christ, as Salmero, who relates, that upon Christ’s flight into Egypt, and entering into Heliopolis, and the temple there, in which were as many idols as days of the year, they all fell, and so this prophecy was fulfilled<sup>f359</sup> but of the Lord’s coming to inflict punishment on the Egyptians; so the Targum,

“and, behold, the Lord shall be revealed in the cloud of his glory, to take vengeance on the Egyptians:”

*and shall come into Egypt;* not by Sennacherib king of Assyria, and his army, whom he should send to invade it, and enter into it, as some think; but rather by Cambyses and Ochus, kings of Persia; though it seems that what is here foretold should be done, was done, not by means of any foreign power, but by the Lord himself, who did by his own power and providence, or suffer to be done, what was done:

*and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence;* or tremble before him; these were many, the chief of them were Osiris and Isis, Apis, Serapis, Vulcan, Bubastis, &c.; some were living creatures, as cats, dogs, oxen, sheep, &c. who might move and tremble, in a literal sense; and some were images, “made with hands”, as the Septuagint here render the word; and

which, as the Targum paraphrases it, should “be broken”; the sense is, that they could none of them save the Egyptians, or deliver them out of their distresses:

*and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it*; like wax before the fire; even the most courageous among them, their soldiers, their army, with their officers and generals; which were the heart of the people, and their defence, and who used to fight for them, and protect them, but now would be dispirited.

**Ver. 2.** *And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians*, &c.] Or mingle and confound them together; in which confusion they should fall upon and destroy one another, as the Midianites did: the phrase is expressive of rebellions and civil wars, as the following words explain it; and which show, that the calamities of Egypt should be brought upon them, not by means of a foreign invasion, but by internal quarrels, and other means, which the Lord would in judgment send among them:

*and they shall fight everyone against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour*; and destroy one another:

*city against city*; of which there were great numbers in Egypt; in the times of Amasis, it is said<sup>f360</sup>, there were twenty thousand:

*[and] kingdom against kingdom*; for though Egypt was but originally one kingdom, yet upon the death of Sethon, one of its kings, who had been a priest of Vulcan, there being no successor, twelve of the nobility started up, and set up themselves as kings, and divided the kingdom into twelve parts<sup>f361</sup>, and reigned in confederacy, for the space of fifteen years; when, falling out among themselves, they excluded Psammiticus, one of the twelve, from any share of government; who gathering an army together, fought with and conquered the other eleven, and seized the whole kingdom to himself, and who seems afterwards regarded in this prophecy; all this happened in the times of Manasseh king of Judah, and so in or quickly after Isaiah’s time: though some understand this of the civil wars between Apries and Amasis, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar. The Septuagint version renders the phrase here, “nome against nome”; for the whole land of Egypt, by Sesostris, one of its kings, was divided into thirty six<sup>f362</sup> nomes, districts, or provinces, whose names are given by Herodotus<sup>f363</sup>, Pliny<sup>f364</sup>, and others; for so the words of that version should be rendered, and not as they are by the Latin interpreter, and in the Arabic version,

which follows it, “law upon law”.

**Ver. 3.** *And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof, &c.]*

Meaning not the spirit of valour and courage, that is expressed before, but of wisdom, prudence, and understanding; the wisdom of Egypt, in which Moses is said to be brought up, (<sup>4172</sup>Acts 7:22) was famous all the world over; hither men of learning, as the ancient philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, travelled, to improve in knowledge, and gain a larger acquaintance with things human and divine; it was the mother and mistress of the liberal arts and sciences; but now what was before like a river full of water, was about to be “emptied”, and drained dry, as the word <sup>f365</sup> used signifies:

*and I will destroy the counsels thereof;* or “swallow [them] up”<sup>f366</sup>, so that they shall be no more seen, or take effect: this explains what is before meant by the spirit of Egypt, and which is further enlarged on, and illustrated in (<sup>2391</sup>Isaiah 19:11-13),

*and they shall seek to the idols;* with which the land abounded, particularly to Osiris and Isis, to Apis, Latona, and others:

*and to the charmers;* that used incantations and spells; magicians and conjurers, that whispered and muttered; for the word used has the signification of speaking in a slow and drawling manner. The Targum renders it “witches”; but Jarchi takes it to be the name of an idol:

*and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards;* (see Gill on <sup>2189</sup>Isaiah 8:19”).

**Ver. 4.** *And the Egyptians will I give over into the hands of a cruel lord, &c.]* Not of Sennacherib king of Assyria, which way go many interpreters, both Christian and Jewish, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; nor of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, as in (<sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 46:25,26) but either of the twelve tyrants that rose up after the death of Sethon above mentioned; for the word is in the plural number, “lords”, though the adjective rendered “cruel” is singular; or else Psammiticus, the father of Pharaohnecho, that slew Josiah; and who conquered the other eleven tyrants, and ruled alone, for the space of fifty four years, with great rigour; and the same is designed in the next clause:

*and a fierce king shall rule over them;* it is reported of Psammiticus, that he gave such offence to his subjects, that two hundred thousand of his

soldiers left him, and went into Ethiopia<sup>f367</sup>. Vitringa interprets this of the Persian emperors, into whose hands Egypt fell, as Cambyses and Ochus; and who, according to historians, were very cruel princes. That there might be no doubt of the sure and certain accomplishment of this prophecy, it is added,

*saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts*; of the armies above and below; and who does what he pleases among the kings and kingdoms of the earth.

**Ver. 5.** *And the waters shall fail from the sea*, &c.] Which Kimchi understands figuratively of the destruction of the Egyptians by the king of Assyria, compared to the drying up of the waters of the Nile; and others think that the failure of their trade by sea is meant, which brought great revenues into the kingdom: but, by what follows, it seems best to take the words in a literal sense, of the waters of the river Nile, which being dried up, as in the next clause, could not empty themselves into the sea, as they used, and therefore very properly may be said to fail from it; nay, the Nile itself may be called a sea, it being so large a confluence of water:

*and the river shall be wasted and dried up*; that is, the river Nile, which was not only very useful for their trade and navigation, but the fruitfulness of the country depended upon it; for the want of rain, in the land of Egypt, was supplied by the overflow of this river, at certain times, which brought and left such a slime upon the earth, as made it exceeding fertile; now the drying up of this river was either occasioned by some great drought, which God in judgment sent; or by the practices of some of their princes with this river, by which it was greatly impaired, and its usefulness diminished.

**Ver. 6.** *And they shall turn the rivers far away*, &c.] The river Nile, called “rivers”, the plural for the singular, because of the abundance of water in it; or its seven streams, with other rivulets, derived from it. Some make the “they” here to refer to the kings of Egypt, and interpret the words of some projects of theirs, by which the course of the river was turned to great disadvantage; particularly they understand it of the twelve tyrants that reigned after Sethon, to whom they ascribe the digging of the vast lake of Moeris, the two pyramids built in the midst of it, and a labyrinth near it, though only the labyrinth was made by them<sup>f368</sup>; and as for the lake, it was made by Moeris, a king of Egypt, from whom it had its name, some hundred years before; and, besides, was of service, and not disservice, to the Nile; for it received its waters when it overflowed too much, and it furnished it with water by an outlet when it failed: rather therefore this

passage may be illustrated by the attempt which Necus, the son of Psammiticus, whom the Scripture calls Pharaohnecho, made, to join the Nile and the Red Sea together, by making a canal from the one to the other; in which work he lost a hundred and twenty thousand men, and desisted from it without finishing it<sup>f369</sup>; but it is thought hereby the river was greatly weakened:

*[and] the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up*; as the river of Nile and its streams were the defence of the land of Egypt, as well as made for the fruitfulness of it, for these must make it less accessible to a foreign enemy; and besides, here lay their shipping, which were their protection; and moreover, from hence brooks and courses of water might be derived and carried about their fortified cities, which added to the strength of them. The Targum renders it deep brooks or rivers; and Kimchi interprets it the brooks of Egypt, taking Matzor to signify Egypt, a word in sound near to Mitzraim, the common word used for Egypt. It looks, by this and other expressions in the context, as if more were designed than the above instance or instances will account for:

*the reeds and flags shall wither*; which grew in the brooks, and near them; and therefore much more the grass and corn, and other trees, which were at a distance; besides, these are mentioned, because of the great usefulness they were of; for of these they made ships, barks, and boats, and mats for bedding, and nets fishing; as also paper to write on, as follows, and which was a staple commodity with them; (see Gill on “~~2880~~ Isaiah 18:2”).

**Ver. 7.** *The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, &c.]* Not at the fountain or origin of the Nile and its streams, but by the sides thereof; on the banks of which grew a reed or rush, called by the Greeks “papyrus” and “biblus”; from whence come the words “paper” and “bible”, or book, of which paper was anciently made; even as early as the times of Isaiah, and so, many hundreds of years before the times of Alexander the great, to which some fix the era of making it.

“According to Pliny<sup>f370</sup>, its root is of the thickness of a man’s arm, and ten cubits long; from this arise a great number of triangular stalks, six or seven cubits high, each thick enough to be easily spanned. Its leaves are long, like those of the bulrush; its flowers stameneous, ranged in clusters at the extremities of the stalks; its roots woody and knotty, like those of rushes; and its taste and smell near akin to those of the cyprus.----The manner of making the

Egyptian paper was this: they began with lopping off the two extremes of the “papyrus”, viz. the head and root, as of no use in this manufacture; the remaining stem they slit lengthwise, into equal parts; and from each of these they stripped the thin scaly coats, or pellicles, whereof it was composed, with a point of a penknife (or needle, as some); the innermost of these pellicles were looked on as the best, and those nearest the rind or bark the worst; they were kept apart accordingly, and constituted different sorts of paper. As the pellicles were taken off, they extended them on a table; then two or more of them were laid over each other transversely, so as that their fibres made right angles; in this state they were glued together by the muddy waters of the Nilus. These being next pressed to get out the water, then dried, and lastly flatted and smoothed, by beating them with a mallet, constituted paper; which they sometimes polished further, by rubbing it with a hemisphere of glass, or the like. There were paper manufactures in divers cities of Egypt; but the greatest and most celebrated was that at Alexandria, where, according to Varro’s account, paper was first made. The trade and consumption of this commodity were in reality incredible. Vopiscus relates, that the tyrant Firmus, who rebelled in Egypt, publicly declared he would maintain an army only, “papyro et glutine”, with paper and glue<sup>f371</sup>.”

So that the withering and drying up of these paper reeds, here threatened, must be a great calamity upon the nation. And, besides paper, of this rush or reed were made sails, ropes, and other naval rigging, as also mats, blankets, clothes, and even ships were made of the stalk of the papyrus; and the Egyptian priests wore shoes made of it<sup>f372</sup>. It may be observed, that paper was made of the pellicles or little skins stripped off of the inside of the stem of the papyrus; which shows with what propriety the word<sup>f373</sup> for paper reeds is here used, which comes from a root which signifies to strip or make bare, and from which also is derived a word which signifies a skin.

*And everything sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away, and be no [more];* all sorts of fruitful plants, and grain of every kind, hemp and flax, after mentioned, and which are opposed to reeds and rushes, which grew of themselves; and if these which were sown by the sides of brooks and rivers withered and came to nothing, then much more what was sown at a greater distance.

**Ver. 8.** *The fishers also shall mourn*, &c.] Because there will be no fish to catch, the waters of the river being dried up, and so will have none to sell, and nothing to support themselves and families with; and this must also affect the people in general, fish being the common food they lived upon, (see <sup><4110></sup>Numbers 11:5), not only because of the great plenty there usually was, but because they killed and ate but very few living creatures, through a superstitious regard unto them; though Herodotus says <sup>f374</sup> the Egyptian priests might not taste of fishes, yet the common people might; for, according to that historian <sup>f375</sup>, when the river Nile flowed out of the lake of Moeris, a talent of silver every day was brought into the king's treasury, arising from the profit of fish; and when it flowed in, twenty pounds; nay, he expressly says <sup>f376</sup>, that some of them live upon fish only, gutted, and dried with the sun:

*and all they that cast angle*, or hook,

*into the brooks shall lament*; which describes one sort of fishermen, and way of catching fishes, with the angle and hook, as the following clause describes another sort:

*and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish*; be dispirited and enfeebled for want of trade and subsistence, and with grief and horror.

**Ver. 9.** *Moreover they that work in fine flax*, &c.] Of which they made fine linen cloth, and yarn, and was much wore by the Egyptians, and was the commodity of the country, and for which other nations traded with them, (<sup><110></sup>1 Kings 10:28 <sup><370></sup>Ezekiel 27:7) but now would have no flax to work, that being withered and gone which was sown by the sides of the brooks, (<sup><390></sup>Isaiah 19:7,15) and no linen cloth or yarn to sell, and consequently in great confusion and distress, as they are here represented <sup>f377</sup>. The Targum renders the whole verse thus,

“they shall be confounded which work flax, which they comb, and of it weave nets;”

and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, not of persons that wrought in flax, to make yarn or linen of it; but who combed it, to make nets of it, as follows:

*and they that weave networks shall be confounded*: because they would have no sale for their nets, the fishermen having no use for them, the rivers being dried up. The word for “networks” signifies “holes”, because nets are



made with holes large enough to let the water through, and so small that the fishes may not get out. Some render the word “white works”<sup>f378</sup>, white linen, white cloth, of which white garments are made, such as nobles and princes formerly wore; hence, in the Hebrew language, they are called by a name of the same root and signification; but the former sense seems best.

**Ver. 10.** *And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, &c.*] Meaning either the persons that work in flax, or in making nets; who shall be disappointed in their views, expectations, and designs, in bringing them to a good market, since there will be no buyers. The word for “purposes” signifies foundations, as in (<sup><4910B></sup>Psalm 11:3) and may design dams and banks, that are made to keep in the water, which shall be broken down, and be of no service to answer the end; but Kimchi observes, that the word in the Talmudic language signifies “nets”, as it does<sup>f379</sup>; and this seems to be most agreeable to the context; and then the words may be rendered, “and its nets shall be broken”<sup>f380</sup>; shall lie and rot for want of use:

*all that make sluices [and] ponds for fish*; or, “all that make an enclosure of ponds of soul”<sup>f381</sup>; or for delight and pleasure; that is, not only such shall be broken in their purposes, ashamed and confounded, and be dispirited, mourn and lament, whose business and employment it is to catch fish, or make nets for that end, and get their livelihood thereby; but even such who enclose a confluence of water, and make fishponds in their fields and gardens for their pleasure, will be disappointed; for their waters there will be dried up, and the fish die, as well as in the common rivers. The Septuagint version renders it, “and all they that make zythum shall grieve”; “zythum” was a sort of malt liquor of the ancients; and the word for “sluices” is of affinity with a word that is often used for strong drink; and so the Syriac version here,

“and all they shall be humbled that make strong drink, for the drink of the soul;”

or for men to drink for pleasure.

**Ver. 11.** *Surely the princes of Zoan [are] fools, &c.*] Zoan was a very ancient city of Egypt, it was built within seven years of Hebron in the land of Judah, (<sup><49132></sup>Numbers 13:22) here it was that the Lord did those miracles, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, before Pharaoh and his people, in order to oblige him to let Israel go, (<sup><49782></sup>Psalm 78:12,43) by which it appears that it was then the royal city, as it seems to have been now; since mention is

made of the princes of it, who usually have their residence where the court is. The Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, call it Tanis, which was the metropolis of one of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, called from it the Tanitic nome<sup>f382</sup>; near it was one of the gates of the Nile, which had from it the name of the Tanitic gate<sup>f383</sup>; the princes of this place, the lords of this nome, though they had princely education, acted a foolish part, in flattering their sovereign, as afterwards mentioned, and in putting him upon doing things destructive to his kingdom and subjects:

*the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish*; the men of whose privy council were esteemed very wise, and greatly boasted of, and much confided in; and yet the counsel they gave him were such as made them look more like brutes than men:

*how say ye unto Pharaoh*; the then reigning prince, for Pharaoh was a name common to all the kings of Egypt. Some think their king Cethon is meant, said to be a very foolish king: others Psammiticus; which seems more likely; though there is no need to apply it to any particular king, they being used to say what follows to all their kings:

*I [am] the son of the wise*; suggesting that wisdom was natural and hereditary to him; though this may not merely respect his immediate ancestors, but remote ones, as Menes or Mizraim, the first king of Egypt, to whom is attributed the invention of arts and sciences; and his son Thoth, the same with Hermes, the Mercury of the Egyptians. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, make these words to be spoken by the wise counsellors of themselves, “we are the sons of wise men”, and so the next clause; likewise Aben Ezra and Jarchi, also the Targum:

*the son of ancient kings?* according to these, it is spoken to Pharaoh thus, “and thou the son of kings of old”; of Ham, Mizraim, Thoth, &c.; the Egyptians boasted much of the antiquity of their kingdom and kings; and they say, from their first king Menes, to Sethon the priest of Vulcan, who lived about the time of this prophecy, were three hundred and forty one generations or ages of men, in which were as many kings and priests; and three hundred generations are equal to ten thousand years<sup>f384</sup>; and so many years, and more, their kings had reigned down to the prophet’s time; which was all vain boasting, there being no manner of foundation for it. Vitringa renders it the son of ancient counsellors; this, as the former, being spoken by the counsellors, not of Pharaoh, but themselves.

**Ver. 12.** *Where [are] they? where [are] thy wise [men]?* &c.] The magicians and soothsayers, the diviners and astrologers, who pretended, by their magic art and skill in judicial astrology, to foretell things to come: this is an address to the king of Egypt, who had such persons about him, and encouraged them, by consulting them on occasion, and rewarding them:

*and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt;* or, “against it”; let them tell, if they can, and make known unto thee the purposes of God’s heart, the things he has resolved upon, even the calamities and punishments he will shortly inflict upon the Egyptians, of which he has given notice by his prophets.

**Ver. 13.** *The princes of Zoan are become fools,* &c.] Or infatuated, in their counsels to Pharaoh, and by giving heed to the magicians and diviners; (see Gill on “~~291~~ Isaiah 19:11”):

*the princes of Noph are deceived;* called Moph, in (~~296~~ Hosea 9:6) where our translation renders it Memphis; and so do the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions here; the Arabic version has it Menphis; the Syriac version Mophis; and the Targum Mephes; the city of Memphis is no doubt intended, which was the chief of the first of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, from whence it was called Memphites: it was the metropolis of upper Egypt, and the seat of their kings and princes; it was built by their first king Menes<sup>f385</sup>, or Mizraim, and had in it the famous temple of Vulcan; it continues to this day, and goes by the name of Alkair, or Grand Cairo:

*they have also seduced Egypt;* the princes of the above places, being deceived themselves by the diviners and astrologers, deceived the common people that inhabited the nomes and provinces where they dwelt; it being usual with such to follow their superiors in principle and practice:

*[even they that are] the stay of the tribes thereof;* or, “who are the corner of its tribes”<sup>f386</sup>; meaning the nomes or provinces of Egypt, especially the Tanitic and Memphitic nomes, whose provinces are mentioned; these are called tribes by the prophet, in the language of the Jews, which land were divided into tribes, as the land of Egypt was divided into nomes; and about this time it was divided into twelve kingdoms, as Israel was into twelve tribes: now, the princes of these tribes and kingdoms, who should have been as cornerstones, to which civil magistrates are compared, (see ~~482~~ Psalm 118:22 ~~304~~ Zechariah 10:4) the stay and support of the people,

and should have kept them right, these led them wrong, into mistakes and errors.

**Ver. 14.** *The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof,* &c.] A spirit of error, as the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions; or of giddiness, as the Vulgate Latin: this he mingled in a cup for them, and poured it out, and gave them it to drink; and an intoxicating cup it was, such as men are made drunk with; to which the allusion is, as the last clause of the verse shows; so that the infatuation and want of wisdom in their counsels were from the Lord; who, because of the vain boasts of their wisdom in righteous judgment, gave them up to judicial blindness, stupidity, and folly:

*and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof;* both in religious and civil affairs, leading them into superstition and idolatry, to which they were of old inclined and addicted, and forming such schemes and projects, and putting them upon such works, as were very detrimental to the nation. Some think this refers to the twelve tyrants, who disagreeing among themselves, being actuated by a perverse spirit, greatly distracted the people; though rather it may refer to the times of Necho, and to his project in cutting a canal for the bringing of the Nile to the Red sea before mentioned, in which he lost several thousands of men without accomplishing it; and of his predecessor, in besieging Ashdod twenty nine years ere he took it<sup>f387</sup>:

*as a drunken [man] staggereth in his vomit;* who is so very drunk, that his head is quite giddy, and cannot walk upright, but staggers as he goes, and vomits as he staggers, and falls down, and is rolled in it, as the Targum; just like such a man were the princes and governors of the Egyptian provinces.

**Ver. 15.** *Neither shall there be [any] work for Egypt,* &c.] No trade or business to carry on; their rivers being dried up, there was no flax to work with, and fine linen was a principal commodity of Egypt; nor any fish to catch, or rushes to make paper of, as before observed: or it would not be in the power of their hands to deliver themselves from the Assyrians that should come against them; and that they should be deprived of wisdom and counsel, and be at their wits' end, not knowing what to do, or what step to take:

*which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do:* high or low, strong or weak, all ranks and orders of men shall have nothing to do; all shall be weak and dispirited, and void of counsel. By the “head” and “branch” may be meant the king and his nobles; and by the “tail” and “rush” the common people; (see <sup>2394</sup>Isaiah 9:14,15). The Targum interprets the whole of their chief men thus,

“and the Egyptians shall have no king to reign, nor prince, noble, governor, or ruler.”

Jarchi explains it of the magicians, astrologers, and stargazers of Egypt, who, with all their boasted knowledge and wisdom, should not be able either to foresee or prevent the evil coming upon them.

**Ver. 16.** *In that day shall Egypt be like unto women, &c.]* Weak and feeble, as the Targum; fearful and timorous, even their military force; and devoid of wisdom, even their princes and nobles:

*and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it:* which the Lord may be said to do, when he lifts up his rod, and holds it over a people, and threatens them with ruin and destruction; perhaps this may refer to what was done in Judea by Sennacherib’s army, which was an intimation to the Egyptians that their turn was next; and if the shaking of the Lord’s hand over a people is so terrible, what must the weight of it be? Some think there is an allusion to Moses’s shaking his rod over the Red sea when the Egyptians were drowned, in which the hand or power of the Lord was so visibly seen, and which now might be called to mind. Ben Melech observes, that when one man calls to another, he waves his hand to him to come to him; so here it is as if the Lord waved with his hand to the enemy to come and fight against Egypt, which caused fear and dread.

**Ver. 17.** *And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, &c.]* Not by reason of war breaking out between them, they being in strict alliance with each other at this time; but on account of what they should hear had befallen the land of Judea, and the cities of it, by the invasion of Sennacherib’s army, which had taken and laid them waste; the tidings of which being brought them a panic would seize them, fearing that they should next fall a sacrifice to them, because of their alliance with them, and nearness to them, there being only the land of the Philistines between them and Egypt; and Judea being invaded and overrun, the way was open for the

Assyrian army into their country; and besides they might reflect, that if the judgments of God fell so heavy on his own people, what might they not expect? and the rather, as they had been the means of drawing them into idolatry, which had provoked the Lord to come out against them; as well as at the remembrance of the injuries they had formerly done them. Jarchi and Kimchi understand this of the fall and ruin of Sennacherib's army, at the siege of Jerusalem, the rumour of which reaching, Egypt would fill them with terror; or as fearing that the hand of the Lord, which was seen in that affair, would be next lifted up against them; which sense is not probable; the former is best. The word used for terror signifies "dancing", such as is not through joy, but fear, (see ~~4977~~ Psalm 107:27):

*everyone that maketh mention thereof*; or calls to mind, or thinks of it, or speaks of it to others, what was done in the land of Judea by the Assyrian army:

*shall be afraid in himself*; that this will be their case quickly in Egypt:

*because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it*; or "upon it", or "concerning it"<sup>f388</sup>; meaning either Judea, which was known by the prophets he sent unto it; or Egypt, who might conclude this from what happened to a neighbouring nation.

**Ver. 18.** *In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt, &c.]* Here opens a scene of mercy, a prophecy of good things to the Egyptians in future times; for this is not to be understood of the selfsame time, that the former calamities would come upon them; but of some time after that; and not of Egypt, spiritual or mystical, that is, Rome, or the antichristian jurisdiction, so called, (~~6108~~ Revelation 11:8) and of the five kingdoms that should revolt from it at the Reformation, as Cocceius thinks; who interprets the above prophecy of the antichristian state, and names the five kingdoms that should break off from it, and did; as Great Britain, the United States of Holland, Denmark and Norway, Swedeland, the people of Germany, and those near them, as Bohemia, Hungary, Transylvania, and Helvetia; but Egypt literally is here designed; and its five cities either intend just so many principal ones, as some think, namely, Memphis, Tanis, Alexandria, Bubastis, and Heliopolis; or rather it is a certain number for an uncertain; and to be understood either of many, as five out of six, since afterwards one is mentioned, as to be destroyed; or rather of a few, as five out of twenty thousand, for so many cities are said to have been in Egypt<sup>f389</sup>; and so this number is used in Scripture for a few; (see ~~4349~~ 1 Corinthians 14:19)

and the prophecy respects the conversion of them, which some think was fulfilled in some little time after; either by some Jews fleeing to Egypt when Judea was invaded, and Jerusalem besieged by Sennacherib, who making known and professing the true religion there, were the means of converting many of the Egyptians; or, as the Jews<sup>f390</sup> think, it had its accomplishment when Sennacherib's army was destroyed, and what remained of them, consisting of Egyptians and other people, were dismissed by Hezekiah, and being used kindly by him, embraced the true religion, and carried it with them into Egypt, and there professed and propagated it; but it seems most likely to refer to later times, the times of the Gospel, when it was carried and preached in Egypt by the Evangelist Mark, and others, to the conversion of them, which is expressed in the following words:

*Speak the language of Canaan*; the Hebrew language, which continued from the time of the confusion in the posterity of Shem, and in the family of Heber, from whom Abraham descended; which was not the language of the old Canaanites, though that was pretty near it, but what the Jews now at this time spake, who dwelt in the land of Canaan: but though this language is here referred to, and might be learned, as it is where the Gospel comes, for the sake of understanding the Scriptures in the original; yet that is not principally meant, but the religion of the Christian and converted Jews; and the sense is, that the Egyptians, hearing and embracing the Gospel, should speak the pure language of it, and make the same profession of it, and with one heart and mouth with them glorify God, and confess the Lord Jesus: and when a sinner is converted, he speaks a different language than he did before; the language of Canaan is the language of repentance towards God, faith in Christ, love to them, and all the saints; it is self-abasing, Christ exalting, and free grace magnifying language; it is the language of prayer to God for mercies wanted, and of praise and thanksgiving for mercies received, and especially for Christ, and the blessings of grace in him; it is the language of experience, and what agrees with the word of God: and in common conversation it is different from others; not swearing, or lying, or filthiness, or foolish jesting, or frothy, vain, and idle talk, are this language; but what is savoury, and for the use of edifying:

*and swear to the Lord of hosts*; not by him, but to him, which sometimes is put for the whole of religious worship, (<sup><1818></sup>Deuteronomy 6:13) and signifies a bowing, a submission, and subjection to him; compare (<sup><2482></sup>Isaiah 45:23) with (<sup><5411></sup>Romans 14:11) it is swearing allegiance to him, owning

him to be their Lord, King, and Lawgiver, and a resolution to obey him in all his commands and ordinances, (see <sup>43916</sup>Psalm 119:106):

*one shall be called the city of destruction*; not one of the five cities before mentioned; because all such as believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession agreeably to it, shall be saved; but the sense is, that one and all, and everyone of these cities, and all such persons in them as speak not the language of Canaan, who neither embrace the Gospel, nor become subject to Christ, shall be devoted to destruction: though there is a Keri and Cetib of these words; it is written “heres”, destruction, but it is read “cheres”, the sun; and there was a city in Egypt called Bethshemesh, the house of the sun, (<sup>2483</sup>Jeremiah 43:13) and by the Greeks Heliopolis<sup>f391</sup>; and by the Latins Solis Oppidum<sup>f392</sup>; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “and one shall be called the city of the sun”; that is, Heliopolis, where the sun was worshipped, and from whence it had its name; and so the words are a display of the grace of God, that in that city, which was the seat of idolatrous worship, there the sun of righteousness should arise, and there should be a number of persons in it that should profess his name. The Targum takes in both the writing and reading of this passage, and renders it,

“the city of Bethshemesh, which is to be destroyed, shall be called one of them.”

**Ver. 19.** *In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt*, &c.] Josephus<sup>f393</sup>, and other Jewish writers<sup>f394</sup>, suppose this to be fulfilled when Onias, the son of Simeon the just, fled into Egypt, and obtained leave of Ptolemy king of Egypt, and Queen Cleopatra, to build a temple and an altar there, like those at Jerusalem, in order to draw the Jews thither, which was about six hundred years after this prophecy; and who did build both a temple and an altar in the nome of Heliopolis, about twenty three miles from the city of Memphis, and which continued three hundred and forty three years; but not a material altar is here meant, but a figurative and spiritual one, and no other than Christ, who is the altar that sanctifies every gift, and upon which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise being offered up are acceptable to God. The phrase denotes a public profession of Christ, and a setting up of his worship; it is used in allusion to the patriarchs, who, wherever they came, set up an altar to the Lord, and worshipped him:



*and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord*; in like manner as the patriarchs used to do, (<sup><OL28></sup>Genesis 28:18 35:1,14) it signifies not only that in the middle of the land, but upon the borders of it, the Christian religion should be embraced and professed; so that no sooner did a man step into it, but he should find that this was the religion professed there: it signifies that here would be placed ministers of the Gospel, who are as pillars to hold forth and support the doctrines of it; and a church state, which is the pillar and ground of it; and persons converted, that should be pillars in the house of God, that should never go out; (see <sup><100></sup>Proverbs 9:1 <sup><810></sup>Galatians 2:9 <sup><415></sup>1 Timothy 3:15 <sup><612></sup>Revelation 3:12).

**Ver. 20.** *And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt, &c.*] This refers either to what goes before, that the altar and pillar were signs and witnesses that the Lord was believed in, professed, and worshipped there; or to what follows after, that the Lord's hearing the cries of men, and answering them, by sending a great Saviour to them, is a token and testimony for him of his great love unto them:

*for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors*; as men awakened and convinced do, feeling the oppressions of a guilty conscience, and a tempting devil, and an ensnaring wicked world:

*and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them*; this is Christ, whom God sent in the fulness of time to be the Saviour of lost sinners; and he is a "great" one indeed, the great God, and our Saviour, (<sup><513></sup>Titus 2:13) who is the Son of God, the true God, and eternal life, who has all the perfections of deity in him; the Creator and Upholder of all things; and must have therefore great and sufficient abilities to save sinners to the uttermost; and those that come to God by him he does save and deliver from all their sins, and out of the hands of all their enemies, and from wrath, ruin, and destruction. Abarbinel<sup>f395</sup> owns that the Messiah is here meant, as undoubtedly he is; and not the angel that destroyed Sennacherib's army, as Kimchi; for the text speaks not of the Jews, but of the Egyptians. Vitringa thinks that either Alexander, called the Great, or else Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who had the same epithet, and who was also called "Soter", the saviour, is here meant.

**Ver. 21.** *And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, &c.*] The means of knowing him would be granted them; which were partly through the Bible being translated into the Greek language, at the request of Ptolemy king of Egypt, which was then understood in that country, and this was a

considerable time before the coming of Christ; and chiefly through the Gospel being brought hither by the Evangelist Mark, and others, whereby many of them were brought to a spiritual, experimental, and evangelical knowledge of Christ:

*and the Egyptians shall know the Lord*; own and acknowledge him, profess faith in him, hope of happiness by him, love of him, and subjection to him, his Gospel and ordinances:

*and shall do sacrifice and oblation*; not such sacrifice and oblation as were enjoined by the ceremonial law, since those would be now abrogated; but the spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise, and good works, and of the presentation of themselves, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to God, their reasonable service: under these ceremonial rites is signified the whole spiritual worship of the New Testament:

*yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform [it]*; lay themselves under obligation to serve the Lord, and act according to it; (see ~~21064~~ Ecclesiastes 5:4,5) and this is to be understood not of legal vows, as that of the Nazarite, or any other, but of the spiritual one of praise and thanksgiving; (see ~~1804~~ Psalm 50:14 65:1).

**Ver. 22.** *And the Lord shall smite Egypt, &c.*] By one afflictive providence or another, which shall awaken them to a sense of sin and duty; or smite their consciences with convictions of sin, through the ministry of the word by his spirits:

*he shall smite and heal [it]*; or “smiting and healing”<sup>f396</sup>; as he smites he shall heal, by an application of pardoning grace and mercy, by sprinkling the blood of Christ on their wounded consciences, and by pouring in the oil and wine of divine love into the wounds made by sin:

*and they shall return, [even] to the Lord*: by faith and repentance; or to his worship, as the Targum; by an obedience to his will, and shall cleave unto him:

*and he shall be entreated of them, and he shall heal them*; when wounded with a sense of sin, and pricked to the heart, they shall cry unto him, and entreat his pardoning grace and mercy, which, being applied to them, heals; for healing diseases and forgiving iniquities are one and the same thing; (see ~~18478~~ Psalm 103:3).

**Ver. 23.** *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, &c.]* It signifies that there should be peace between them, all hostilities should cease, free trade and commerce with each other should be opened, and nothing should hinder communion with one another; which some think had some show of accomplishment in the times of Psammiticus; but it chiefly refers to Gospel times, and to the Christian communion between one nation and another, that receive the Gospel, though before implacable enemies, as the Egyptians and Assyrians were:

*and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria:* which is expressive of entire concord and harmony between them, such as was among the first Christians:

*and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians;* that is, the Lord, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; they shall both serve the Lord with one shoulder and consent, unite in prayer to the Lord, in hearing the word, and attending on other ordinances. Some render it, “the Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians”<sup>f397</sup>; not as being their lords and masters in a servile way, but by love, as saints do or should serve one another, doing all kind offices of love to each other; (see <sup><REF></sup>Galatians 5:13).

**Ver. 24.** *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, &c.]* There shall be a triple alliance between them; Jew and Gentile shall be made one, the middle wall of partition being broken down; yea, Israel, or the Jews, shall be the third, or the Mediator between them both, or the means of uniting the Gentiles together, since the Gospel of peace was to go out from them, as it did. Perhaps there may be an allusion to the situation of the land of Israel between Egypt and Assyria:

*[even] a blessing in the midst of the land;* or of the earth, the whole world, being the means of conveying the blessings of grace to the several nations of the world; the Messiah, in whom all nations are blessed, descending from them, and the Gospel being sent out from them unto all nations, which publishes the blessings of grace by Christ, and is the means both of the knowledge, application, and possession of them.

**Ver. 25.** *Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, &c.]* Not only Israel, but Egypt and Assyria, even all his chosen ones, whether among Jews or Gentiles:

*saying, blessed [be] Egypt my people;* as they must needs be blessed who are the Lord’s covenant people; for he being their covenant God, his

blessing is upon them, even life for evermore; they are blessed with all the blessings of the covenant, even all the spiritual blessings which are in Christ; they are secure of his love, and may depend upon his power and protection; they are happy here, and will be so hereafter:

*and Assyria the work of my hands*; not as creatures only, but new creatures, having the good work of grace wrought in their hearts, of which God is the author; and therefore are called his workmanship, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 2:10) and who must be blessed, because, by this work of grace upon them, they appear to be the chosen of God, and precious, to be his children, and dear unto him, whom he will not forsake, and who are formed for himself, and for heaven, and happiness:

*and Israel mine inheritance*; chosen by him to be so, and given to Christ as such; and who must be happy, because, as they are the Lord's inheritance, portion, and peculiar treasure, so he has provided an inheritance for them, incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens. The Targum interprets all this of Israel, thus,

“blessed be my people, whom I brought out of Egypt; and because they sinned before me, I carried them captive into Assyria; and when they are turned, they are called my people, and mine inheritance, Israel.”