

Sermon Notes & References
The World for Christ
Isaiah 19:16-25
November 8, 2009

- A. Introduction
 - 1. reading of chapter 19
 - 2. the two great world powers of Isaiah's day^A
 - 3. God has his plan^B
- B. God converts Egypt 19:18
 - 1. what is the language of Canaan?
 - 2. what is it to swear?
 - 3. what is this City of Destruction?
- C. God is truly worshipped in Egypt 19:19-22
 - 1. ... by the signs of the altar and pillar (19-20)
 - a. why were these set up?
 - b. what did oppression mean?^C

- 2. ... by their true knowledge of God (21)^D
 - a. where did this come from?
 - b. in what terms was it demonstrated?
- 3. ... by God's treating them as His beloved children (22)^E ... How?
- D. Assyria, too, will be converted 19:23
 - 1. what is the high Way bringing this to pass?^F
- E. God's Purpose: the World for Christ ^G 19:24-25
 - 1. we are part of Egypt and Assyria in a spiritual sense
- F. God's Purpose: the World for Christ ^H 19:24-25
 - 1. we are part of Egypt and Assyria in a spiritual sense

^A Numbers 11:4-6
^B Isaiah 19:16-17, Acts 2:22-24
^C John 16:33, Matthew 5:11-12

^D Matthew 11:27, John 14:7, Hebrews 9, 10:10, 26, John 4:23
^E Hebrews 12:6
^F John 14:6, Acts 4:12; Ephesians, chapter 2, especially verses 11 on
^G Deuteronomy 4:37, 7:8; John 3:16
^H Deuteronomy 4:37, 7:8; John 3:16

A. Introduction

1. This 19th chapter of Isaiah is a prophecy to Egypt
 - a. let us read through it now, giving its outline as we read
 - b. verses 1 to 15 (the passage in our adult Bible class) are an announcement of God's judgement upon Egypt
 - (A) 19: 1-4 – God's judgement upon Egypt's idols
 - (B) 19: 5-10 – God's judgement upon Egypt's industry
 - (C) 19: 11-15 – God's judgement upon Egypt's wisdom
 - c. verses 16-17 form a transition, moving from the theme of judgement to the purpose of God has for this land of Egypt
 - d. verses 18 to 25 announce God's salvation, which is never far away for judgement in this book nor in the Bible
 - (A) 19: 18 – God converts Egypt
 - (B) 19: 19-22 – God is truly worshipped by Egypt
 - (C) 19: 23 – Assyria, too, will be converted
 - (D) 19: 24-25 – God's Purpose: the World for Christ

B. In Isaiah's day there were two great world powers

1. we have spent some chapters in considering Assyria
 - a. Assyria was but one of a series of empires which were based in the Mesopotamian basin
 - b. it was followed by Babylon, or Chaldean empire
 - c. then by the Median-Persian empire
 - d. which later was displaced, first by Greece, then by Rome
 - e. each of these empires represents, is a symbol of,
 - (A) the overt, hostile, anti-God ruler of this world
 - (B) the one who would usurp the rule of God
 - (C) being types of the Antichrist and the man of sin

2. the other great world power was Egypt
 - a. and our attention is drawn to it today
 - b. a land which was blessed with a fertility arising from the twice-yearly overflowing of the Nile which refreshed and watered the land
 - c. it had a great and ancient civilization, its people having descended from Mizraim the son of Ham, son of Noah
 - d. its works were wonders of the ancient world
 - e. in the Bible, Egypt is a symbol of the world, of worldliness
 - (A) of an indifference to the one true God
 - (B) of a comfortable, self-indulgent life-style
 - (C) the book of Numbers records this complaint of the Israelites after deliverance from the bondage of Egypt: '4 ¶ The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, 6 but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."' (Numbers 11:4-6)
 - (D) and it was to this ancient enemy that Israel turned from time to time for help, instead of trusting in God
 - (E) How easy it is for the people of God to go back into the world when difficulties arise!
3. so that is where Israel lived in geographical terms; between
 - a. the anti-God hostility of world rulers in the north, and,
 - b. the self-indulgent worldliness to the south;
 - c. yet what has God to say about these pagan nations? He has a purpose, a purpose which changes totally the geographic situation: it is little Judah who will bring fear to this great nation: 'The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the Lord of hosts which He is purposing against them.' (Isaiah 19:17)
 - d. God is working out His purpose for Egypt, and God works out his purposes without fail – God's eternal purposes
 - (A) didn't grind to an abrupt halt as a result of Adam and Eve's sinning in the garden of Eden
 - (B) didn't fail with Israel's failure to be true to Him when they entered the promised land

- (C) didn't need alteration because the rulers and people of Israel rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah
- (D) for you see, the way of salvation through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was not a late afterthought
- (E) rather it was all part of God's plan as Peter said on the day of Pentecost: *'22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.'* (Acts 2:22-24)

- e. God's purpose for Egypt is running according to plan
- f. we have already outlined as we read through this chapter:
 - (A) 19:18 – God converts Egypt
 - (B) 19:19-22 – God is truly worshipped by Egypt
 - (C) 19:23 – Assyria, too, will be converted
 - (D) 19:24-25 – God's Purpose: the World for Christ

C. 19:18 – God converts Egypt – *In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing allegiance to the Lord of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.*

1. the language of Canaan was the language that Israel spoke
 - a. it was Hebrew, but that is not the point here – you do not need to run out and learn Hebrew
 - b. rather it was the language of God's people – His remnant – the language in which they prayed to and praised God
 - c. that is the language that will be spoken in these 5 cities
 - d. whether the number 5 is symbolic or specific we do not know, nor do we need to know, but later verses suggest strongly that this applies to the greater part of Egypt
2. the second point is that they will *'swear to the Lord of hosts'*
 - a. that is language that conveys more than the words used
 - b. this is no careless use of words, such as people use when they curse and swear, taking God's name in

vain

c. this is an expression of their deeply resolved commitment to the Lord God of Israel – so some translators have added the word '[allegiance](#)' just to make this clear

3. the last point is in that expression, '[the City of Destruction](#)'

a. while there are a variety of interpretations, I believe that Isaiah is doing here what he does elsewhere: make use of a similarity in words to convey a particularly rich message

b. the expression in Hebrew is nearly identical to another, '[the City of the Sun](#)' – there was a city in Egypt described by that name; in the Greek it was called '[Heliopolis](#)' and was the place of the worship of the Egyptian sun-god, Ra

c. the implication, I think, is clear – with the Egypt's coming to the one true God, false idols are head to destruction

4. Egypt is converted: it worships in language of God's people, it is committed to God, it abandons its idols; so we find ...

D. 19:19-22 – God is truly worshipped by Egypt...

1. 19:19-20 – ... by the signs of the altar and pillar – '[19 In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its border. 20 It will become a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Saviour and a Champion, and He will deliver them.](#)'

a. in the times of the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob – and during the conquest of the land of Canaan, the setting up of altars and of stone pillars was a witness to the Lord

(A) now this occurs in Egypt, converted out of the world

(B) it establishes physically and spiritually a witness to the God who has become their salvation, their champion, the One who has delivered them

b. moreover, there is a second witness to the truth of the worship which they have undertaken

(A) they are now faced with oppressors – not brought by God upon them – but by the world they have left

(B) Jesus warns and encourages His disciples in this: '[These things I have spoken to you, so that in](#)

Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.' (John 16:33)

- (C) and it was part of His manifesto of the Kingdom: '11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.' (Matthew 5:11-12)

2. 19:21 – ... by their true knowledge of God – 'Thus the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the Lord and perform it.'

- a. so now the Lord is known or made known to Egypt
- b. this again can only be a work of Jesus Christ, who said, 'All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' (Matthew 11:27), and again
- c. 'If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' (John 14:7); and this knowledge is shown by their service
- d. in the OT, the mark of true worship was to be found in the following of the sacrificial ritual as given to Moses
 - (A) but with Jesus Christ, an end was brought to sacrifice
 - (B) Hebrews 9 makes this clear as a basis of the statements of Hebrews 10. 'By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' (verse 10) and 'there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins' (verse 26), true both in context and absolutely
 - (C) this then is no prophecy that sacrifice, without or with blood, will be reinstated in the land of Egypt, but rather fulfilment of Christ's words: '... true worshippers will worship the father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.' (John 4:23)

3. 19:22 – ... by God's treating them as His beloved children – 'The Lord will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them.'

- a. 'whom the Lord loves,' we read, 'He disciplines' (Heb 12:6)
- b. that it is speaking of discipline and not judgement in this verse is clear, for underlying and surrounding

the striking there is always God's intention to heal – to make whole, to bring those chastised to spiritual completeness

E. 19:23 – Assyria, too, will be converted – 'In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.'

1. some interpret this very literally, along various lines such as
 - a. a super-highway running from Cairo to Bagdad (or other city), a highway along which the commerce and people between these nations may flow back and forth
 - b. accessing Jerusalem as a place of worship
 - c. so that this highway provides the communication and sharing between nations resulting in peaceful relations

2. there is only one high Way which can bring this to pass
 - a. a Way in which those who have been
 - (A) enemies with one another and with God's people
 - (B) who were, if I may paraphrase from Ephesians 2, 'Gentiles in the flesh ... at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and stranger to its covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world ... strangers and aliens ... that by the blood of Christ are brought near ... being made one new ... body to God through the cross ... made fellow citizens with the saints and part of God's own family.'
 - b. that Way is the Lord Jesus Christ
 - (A) these verses in Isaiah are a promise of the Messiah
 - (B) the Christ who alone can bring the warring parties together before God
 - (C) that is God's plan, founded in eternity in God the Son

F. 19:24-25 – God's Purpose: the World for Christ – '24 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25 whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."'

1. God announces a three-fold blessing

- a. for there are three parties to receive
 - b. parties that share equally in that blessing
 - c. and by the names given, parties that share permanently in the blessing and the fellowship with God
2. do you not wonder at those three phrases applied to nations
- a. 'My people ... work of My hands ... My inheritance'
 - b. all three are first applied particularly and specifically to the chosen people, Israel, in a precious way
 - c. yet here they are doled out, one to Egypt, one to Assyria and one to Israel
 - d. when, through the blood of Christ, we are made one new man, there is no distinction found among God's people in His view and in His showering of spiritual blessing
 - e. God, we read, chose and redeemed Israel on account of His love for them, Deuteronomy 4:37, 7:8 and elsewhere
 - f. God, we read, 'so loved the world that He gave His Son ...'
 - g. Egypt and Assyria here are representative – types of the indifferent and of the antagonistic who through the love of God in Christ are brought to salvation by the Holy Spirit – pictures of countless men and women the world around

G. Conclusion

1. God's plan of salvation is one that is open for all mankind
 - a. sadly, not all people are going to accept God's plan
 - b. the book of Revelation depicts in very graphic terms that as well as their being a heaven in which God's people will dwell with Him and enjoy Him forever
 - c. there is also a hell, a lake of eternal fire, in which those who continue to reject God will suffer
 - d. but, praise God, heaven will hold people from every nation
2. yet our responsibility is not in determining who enters each
 - a. we are to bear the message of salvation to the indifferent masses represented by Egypt who live all around us
 - b. we are to carry the gospel to the antagonistic foes of Christ so that by the power of the Holy Spirit some may be saved

- c. and God, in His gracious plan, has a part for each and every one of us in carrying out this responsibility
- d. a preacher of old^{2} suggests 3 ways this should effect us
 - (A) it should raise our expectations of what God will do
 - (B) it should increase our exertions in bringing it to pass
 - (C) it should enlarge our liberality in support of the work

1. © 2009 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard (NAS) version of the Bible, © 1960 ... 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. C. Simeon, M.A., in the Biblical Museum; edited by James Comper Gray, ca 1870