

# ISAIAH

## Chapter 19

### *A Prophecy About Egypt*

An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. <sup>2</sup>“I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. <sup>3</sup>The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. <sup>4</sup>I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. <sup>5</sup>The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry. <sup>6</sup>The canals will stink; the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up. The reeds and rushes will wither, <sup>7</sup>also the plants along the Nile, at the mouth of the river. Every sown field along the Nile will become parched, will blow away and be no more. <sup>8</sup>The fishermen will groan and lament, all who cast hooks into the Nile; those who throw nets on the water will pine away. <sup>9</sup>Those who work with combed flax will despair, the weavers of fine linen will lose hope. <sup>10</sup>The workers in cloth will be dejected, and all the wage earners will be sick at heart. <sup>11</sup>The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools; the wise counselors of Pharaoh give senseless advice. How can you say to Pharaoh, “I am one of the wise men, a disciple of the ancient kings”? <sup>12</sup>Where are your wise men now? Let them show you and make known what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt. <sup>13</sup>The officials of Zoan have become fools, the leaders of Memphis are deceived; the cornerstones of her peoples have led Egypt astray. <sup>14</sup>The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit. <sup>15</sup>There is nothing Egypt can do— head or tail, palm branch or reed. <sup>16</sup>In that day the Egyptians will be like women. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. <sup>17</sup>And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them. <sup>18</sup>In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction. <sup>19</sup>In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the LORD at its border. <sup>20</sup>It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD will make himself

known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. <sup>22</sup> The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them. <sup>23</sup> In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. <sup>24</sup> In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. <sup>25</sup> The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”

**19:1–20:6** See Jer 46; Eze 29–32. (CSB)

**19:1** *oracle*. See note on 13:1. (CSB)

Oracle is a burden, Hebrew *massa'*. It emphasizes that what the prophets spoke were words of the Lord and not their own words. The translation “burden” emphasizes that the prophet must deliver a word of judgment on the Lord’s enemies. (TLSB p. 1079)

*rides on a swift cloud*. A metaphor used also in Ps 68:4; 104:3; cf. Mt 26:64. (CSB)

He will not delay; swiftly the disaster will strike them. (Luther)

Expresses His power over nature as well as the Egyptian pantheon of god (Ps. 68:33). (TLSB)

In the previous chapter, the Lord had said, “I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place” (18:4). But by contrast, the Lord now is active. (PBC)

*idols ... tremble*. See Jer 50:2. God had also previously judged Egypt’s idols during the ten plagues (see Ex 12:12 and note). (CSB)

The meaning is: Hypocrisy does not bear up under the scourge of God; true godliness does. As long as ungodliness fares well, the hypocrites are proud and fierce beyond measure, but nothing is more terrible to them than an onrushing calamity. They become foolish, and because they have neither the Word nor the true understanding of God, they falter and stagger. (Luther)

The possibility of another exodus that again judges the gods of Egypt and causes the idols and their makers to tremble and melt. (TLSB)

*hearts ... melt*. See 13:7. (CSB)

When confidence in one's own righteousness falls away, fear and contradictory ideas and counsels arise. For nowhere but in the Word of God does my own quaking find firm footing. God is the counselor and the wisdom of the godly, who believe in Him. Disunity is the beginning of a kingdom's overthrow, as we read in Luke 11:17. This results from the collapse of confidence in religion, for then some urge this, others argue against it. When God is about to fight against men, He first takes their heart away, He deprives them of courage and daring, He causes them to disagree among themselves, He undermines their every counsel. Where there are religions, there are a variety of prophets. The Egyptians, however, were more superstitious than others. (Luther)

**19:2** *Egyptian against Egyptian*. Cf. 9:21. The Libyan dynasty clashed with the "Ethiopians" (Cushites; see note on 18:1) and with the Saites of Dynasty 24. (CSB)

Inciting them to civil war and anarchy such as we are told of by secular historians. All this was fulfilled at the beginning of the seventh century before Christ, about the time before Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, when Egypt was divided into twelve kingdoms and into forty-two nomes, or districts, between some of whom there was always dissension, and real peace was not established even after Psammetichus had become sole ruler of the country. (Kretzmann)

God works His judgment through civil war. (TLSB)

We must be careful not to look for exact incidents in history that appear to fulfill these prophecies. Isaiah's intention is to show the Lord's action in bringing judgment upon Egypt. When we turn our attention to world history, we lose sight of the Lord and His action. It is often difficult to limit these judgments to one particular incident. We do better to consider them a general picture of political unrest caused when the Lord Almighty steps in with judgment. (PBC)

**19:3** EGYPTIANS WILL LOSE HEART – So that the courage of the Egyptians would, literally, "be emptied out" (Kretzmann)

Their will and self-esteem will be destroyed and they will have lost in their abilities. (TLSB)

BRING THEIR PLANS TO NOTHING – Swallowing all their plans, so that the rulers would be helpless in the situation. (Kretzmann)

They have lost hope in their abilities. (TLSB)

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD – literally, "the murmurers, or mutterers," those who professed to be in touch with the spirit world. (Kretzmann)

Advice of their sages (cf Ex 7:1–13). (TLSB)

*inquire*. To seek guidance. (TLSB)

*consult ... spiritists*. Israel also did so in desperate times (see 8:19 and note). (CSB)

Worthless idols, spirits, or the dead. God condemns all divination. (TLSB)

Those actually in league with the Evil One. Then, as now, people who refused to accept the true God resorted to superstitious rites and to the assistance of the spirits of darkness. (Kretzmann)

**19:4** *cruel master*. The king of Assyria (see 20:4). Esarhaddon conquered Egypt in 670 B.C. (CSB)

Too vague to pinpoint a particular ruler; could be Piankhi of Ethiopia (reigned 741–715 BC), Sargon II of 20:1), Sennacherib, or Esarhaddon (reigned 681–669 BC). Or it could have been fulfilled multiple times in various reigns. (TLSB)

A FIERCE KING – Three Pharaohs, namely, Psammetichus, Necho, and Hophra, oppressed the Egyptians so severely that the land never recovered from their tyranny. (Kretzmann)

THE LORD, THE LORD ALMIGHTY – This judgment is certain because the Lord, the Lord Almighty, has declared it. The names for God (Lord and the Lord Almighty or Lord of Hosts) punctuate the prophecy with a note of finality and certainty. The Lord of free and faithful grace is also the Lord, sovereign Master of the universe. (PBC)

**19:5–7** The drought's thoroughness will dry up the river and seriously affect Egypt. The Nile River is Egypt's center of prosperity and vitality. (TLSB)

**19:5** *river will dry up*. The Nile was the lifeline of Egypt; its annual flooding provided essential water and produced the only fertile soil there. (CSB)

These are allegorical expressions. They say that formerly the Nile flooded all of Egypt with the waters rising 16 ells [an ell is linear measure about equal to 45 inches] in height. From this the land was made extremely fertile, but they say this has now ceased. The Nile receives seven rivers into itself. Therefore Egypt was rich in waters and fish. For this reason the prophet uses the picture of the fishermen to depict Egypt's calamity. (Luther)

THE RIVER BED – Namely, those that flow into the sea, will be drained, that is, those living beside the sea will be despoiled. So it is in Job (Job 14:11). Tyrants empty out, that is, plunder, the house; the river will be deserted, that is, the wealth will be destroyed. (Luther)

**19:6** *canals*. For irrigation. (CSB)

REEDS AND RUSHES – Wealthy citizens. (Luther)

Principally the papyrus-plants depending altogether upon the moisture of the river. (Kretzmann)

**19:7** *sown field*. Egypt's crops were normally abundant, and some were exported. (CSB)

That is, all people, even the country people and the lowest classes, will be exposed to plunder and will be put to flight. (Luther)

**19:8** *fishermen*. Fish were usually plentiful (see Nu 11:5). (CSB)

That is, the businessmen. (Luther)

**19:9** *work with ... flax*. Large amounts of water were needed to process flax. (CSB)

Woven into linen fabric, a key Egyptian industry.

That is, the skilled craftsmen. (Luther)

Combed flax was woven into linen fabric, a key Egyptian industry. (TLSB)

*fine linen*. Another well-known Egyptian export. (CSB)

No disaster is alone, nor does it strike only one. When the fishermen become inactive, the work of those who weave nets and those who dig fishponds and liveboxes is destroyed. Thus far the prophet has spoken of the war and poverty and plunder of the Egyptians. Now, the use we are to make of a prophecy of this kind, which is made against all the nations encircling Jerusalem, is this, that we may learn that our enemies will not escape punishment, that God is the avenger of the godly, and that none of the ungodly are more powerful than God. Again, we should learn that the godly are to be preserved, even though they should go down to the depths of hell. (Luther)

**19:10** **WORKERS** – ESV has “pillars.” Egypt's rich and mighty will be affected. As well as the workers. (TLSB)

The Lord brought the economy of Egypt to its knees. Prosperity disappeared. The Lord reminds us that He controls these affairs too. He is not simply a God of armies and history. He gives prosperity and poverty too and sends both to people for His own purposes. (PBC)

**19:11** *Zoan*. A city (possibly Tanis) in the northeastern part of the Nile delta, familiar to the Israelites during their years in Egypt (see Nu 13:22; Ps 78:12, 43). It was the northern capital for the 25th dynasty (see note on 18:1). (CSB)

Northeastern Nile Delta. Would have been the first region encountered by any who traveled from Israel to Egypt. (TLSB)

*wise men*. See v. 12. Egypt was famous for its wise men (see 1Ki 4:30). (CSB)

The thorough breaking of Egypt continues in these verses with the loss of their wisdom, for which they had been known. Isaiah stresses the total loss of direction and wise leadership by associating Pharaoh, the princes, the wisest counselors, and wise men with foolishness, stupid counsel, and delusion (v 12; cf 41:20; 44:25; 47:12–15; 1Co 1:20). (TLSB)

Now there follows a mockery against the Egyptians' boast of wisdom and antiquity, for the purpose of praising the true and only wise God. But Isaiah taunts them thus: Since you are so very wise and of so ancient a race, why do you not understand how to escape the danger? You think you know more than the Jews, but you are truly foolish. There was the counsel of the princes, but something else was decreed by God, namely, that Egypt was to be made subject to Assyria. This is the way of a doomed empire; it is hardened and puffed up, and the more the evil threatens, the prouder and more inflexible it becomes, just as the impenitent do not fear God and do not hear the voice of the Lord. Thus Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:3: "When people say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them." For this reason the heathen invented the wheel of fortune.<sup>4</sup> But the ungodly, on the contrary, do not believe that evil will come to them, and so they always predict the good for themselves. (Luther)

I AM ONE OF THE WISE MEN – That is, you have wise men. The Hebrew way of saying it is "I am a son of the wise." (Luther)

Isaiah stresses the total loss of direction and wise leadership by associating Pharaoh, the princes, the wisest counselors, and wise men with foolishness, stupid counsel, and delusion. (TLSB)

How tight the grip of unbelief! Unbelievers do not believe that God's judgment will happen. When it does occur, they turn to their own schemes and plans for relief. (PBC)

**19:13** *Memphis*. An important city 15 miles south of the delta that was the capital during the Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2160 B.C.). (CSB)

A former capital of Egypt. The image of the cornerstones of Egypt causing her to stagger conveys Egypt's full lack of wisdom and strength. (TLSB)

"The princes of Noph," as if to say, their counsels indeed had an impressive appearance, but they deceived them, and nothing came of it. The counsels of the ungodly seem to have hand and foot and are not far distant from the act, but nothing is more contemptible among them than the counsels of the godly and of doctrine. (Luther)

*cornerstones.* Prophets and priests, as well as political leaders (see 9:15–16). (CSB)

The cornerstone of the tribes, that is, the king with the people. Corners denote heads, princes, kings. Our cornerstone is Christ, as we read in Eph. 2:20. (Luther)

The image of the cornerstones of Egypt causing her to stagger conveys Egypt's full lack of wisdom and strength. (TLSB)

Isaiah says that the very foundations of Egyptian society do not offer Egypt any help. The chaos that comes because of God's judgment affects every part of Egyptian life. (PBC)

**19:14** THE LORD HAS Poured INTO THEM – This is the course of their deception by the Lord, namely, it has been done. The picture of the drunken man is frequent in the Scriptures, as in Psalm 107:27: "They reeled and staggered like drunken men." In time of peace the ungodly are very sure of the spirit and of wisdom, but in trials they do not stand fast. They turn from this to that. Where there are many divergent recommendations, there is sure disaster. But where many recommendations are in harmony, there is safety. "A cart is never drawn well by unmatched oxen." (Luther)

*spirit of confusion.* The result of the hand of the Lord against Egypt is that the once-proud nation is as a drunken man (cf 5:11, 22; 28:7–8), unable to support itself or know where to turn for support, and thus rendered impotent (Ezk 29:8–12; 2Th 2:11–12) (TLSB)

*drunkard staggers.* Israel's leaders stagger in 28:7–8. (CSB)

This man goes astray on the road, he weaves hither and thither. So does the ungodly when he is weighed down with trouble. In the Scriptures the cup may denote misfortune that is assigned; Christ had His cup, and every godly man bears a cross. Some become drunk from the cup, some who are not ungodly will drink so that they waver and stagger, and they will not have the sense to avoid it. The godly man is a strong counselor who upholds them with his word and consoles them when they take the cup, so that they do not become drunk. Every

trial apart from the Word of God makes a man drunk, that is, uncertain and desperate, so that he does not know where he is going. The godly have learned that the scourge is a reward of the Lord that will turn out for their benefit. They know that it is the Lord's good will that they be put to the test and not be destroyed. The ungodly, staggering as they do, even vomit. Their counsels are sheer vomit and filth, food for pigs. (Luther)

**19:15** *head or tail, palm branch or reed.* Egypt's leaders. The same two pairs are used of Israel's leaders in 9:14–15. (CSB)

Neither the highest nor the lowest. All are powerless. (TLSB)

Above in Is. 9:14 the same thing is said of tail, branch, and reed. The prophet who speaks a lie is a tail. The meaning is: In time of disaster the Egyptians will not have a prince or a judge, both in spiritual and in civil affairs. Both government and priesthood will be destroyed for them, both realms will fall into ruin. Then they will not have any branches, either large or small, and the people will perish together with the perishing state and religion. The government will be without people and the priesthood without disciples. The laws and worship will perish together with the devastated kingdom. This is the punishment for contempt of the Word of God. (Luther)

No person in Egypt, whether of the ruling or of the serving class, whether lofty or humble, will be able to do anything to stop the general destruction. Such is the effect of the Lord's judgment upon Egypt. (Kretzmann)

**19:1–15** As the Lord stirs up civil war in Egypt, the Egyptians will seek after wisdom, but will find only foolish counsel. The Lord forbids all forms of divination and satanic arts. We should instead call on the Lord's name in every time of trouble (Second Commandment). Although the river waters of Egypt dried up in judgment, we are cleansed with a river of blessing through faith in Jesus Christ. We have the wise counsel of His Word, which promises forgiveness and everlasting life. • We praise You, O God, for claiming us as Your own through Holy Baptism. By that washing, help us die to sin every day and live before You in righteousness and purity forever. Amen. (TLSB)

**19:16–25** A chain of four announcements of coming events associated with "that day": 1. An act of divine judgment will cause Egypt to "shudder with fear" (v. 16) and be in terror of Judah (vv. 16–17). 2. "Five cities" in Egypt will "swear allegiance" to the Lord (v. 18). 3. Because of a divine act of deliverance and healing in Egypt, an altar will be erected in Egypt where Egyptians will offer sacrifices to the Lord (vv. 19–22). 4. Egypt, Assyria and Israel will be linked into one people of the Lord (vv. 23–25). The prophet looks well beyond the present realities in which the world powers do not acknowledge the true God and proudly pursue their own destinies, running roughshod over the people of the Lord. He foresees a series of divine acts that will bring about the conversion of the nations. (CSB)

**19:16, 18–19, 23–24** *In that day.* The coming day of the Lord (see 10:20, 27 and note; cf. 11:10–11). (CSB)

**19:16–17** The result of the ruinous actions of vv 1–15 is again exemplified. It is explicit that the Egyptians know the cause of their terror and problems—it is the Lord who sends Judah to confront them. (TLSB)

**19:16** EGYPTIANS WILL LIKE WOMEN – Concerning this also the historians write that in Egypt the men do the work of women and vice versa. The female sex is weak, they lack courage and judgment, they are timid and slow of mind. Sometimes even the timid find good judgment, but in doubtful matters no one can give counsel. (Luther)

*shudder with fear.* Like the people of Jericho (Jos 2:9, 11). (CSB)

*hand ... the LORD... raises.* See 14:26–27 and note. (CSB)

Namely, of the Assyrians which the Lord will shake over Egypt this way and that way, that is, the Assyrians will move through the whole kingdom and lay everything waste, and the Egyptians will find neither help nor counsel. (Luther)

**19:17** *land of Judah.*† The Egyptians will recognize that it is the God of Judah who has brought judgment upon them. (CSB)

The Lord’s earthly base of operations, from which He brought terror to the Egyptians. (TLSB)

That is, then the Egyptians will remember the word spoken to them which they now despise and ridicule as a lie. “But,” he says, “I shall live when those things happen and they will be afraid at the memory of the land of Judah because of the prophecy that was foretold there, so that to the present disaster there is added fear and dread of the future, and they will fear things more cruel than they are now experiencing.” (Luther)

WHAT THE ALMIGHTY IS PLANNING – Namely, “what I have intimated to them and what they ridiculed. But when it will come to pass, there will be no end of terror.” So it happens with the Word that it is not believed but despised when it is proclaimed, but is feared the more when it is fulfilled. (Luther)

**19:18–25** Egypt and Assyria convert. (TLSB)

**19:18** *five.* Perhaps in the sense of “many.” (CSB)

Not named. (TLSB)

The number five represents part of Egypt but not all of it. (PBC)

After the prophet's prediction of disaster and the spoken taunt there now follows a salutary and blessed promise for the Egyptians who will receive the Lord, who always preserves the remnant. And though Egypt was an ungodly land and more superstitious than others, it will then have greater praise than the rest of the nations. Egypt troubled the Jews after their exodus less than others and therefore will have more moderate punishment. (Luther)

*Speak the language of Canaan.* † A symbolic reference to Egypt's allegiance to the Lord (see vv. 21–22, 25). (CSB)

Hbr language, used by Israel to worship the Lord. (TLSB)

*City of Destruction.* Probably a reference to Heliopolis, city of the sun-god; it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (see Jer 43:12–13). The Hebrew for “destruction” is almost identical to the Hebrew for “sun.” (CSB)

Probably a reference to the city of On, a famous center of sun worship near Cairo, which the Greeks called Heliopolis. Hbr words for sun and destruction are almost identical. A wordplay may be intended, so when the citizens swore allegiance to the Creator of heaven and earth, veneration of the sun was abolished. For this reason, it received special mention. (TLSB)

הַהֲרֵסוּ, Haheres. From the certainty of the prophecy he mentions one city by its proper name. In ancient days there was at Alexandria an outstanding school of Christians. Heliopolis. (Luther)

**19:19** *altar.* † Worship of the true God will unite nations as far apart in miles and as mutually antagonistic as Assyria and Egypt. (CSB)

Worship of the Lord spreads across the whole land, from the midst to the border. Abraham and Jacob used the pillar and altar for worship. Luther: “Before Christ no other place was to be established for the worship of God beside Jerusalem. Therefore the prophet is speaking of the time when the Gospel was spread” (AE 16:164). (TLSB)

This must be understood as referring to the time after Christ, not before. “In the place which the Lord your God will choose,” Deut. 12:18 says, and above in Is. 2:3: “Out of Zion shall go forth the Law.” Before Christ no other place was to be established for the worship of God beside Jerusalem. Therefore the prophet is speaking of the time when the Gospel was spread. He puts five cities in place of many, a definite number for an indefinite one. In the Gospel there were ten virgins, five foolish, etc. Also there were five talents, etc. (Matt. 25:1 ff., 15). Hence “five cities” means that several, not all, but some, will follow the Word. This is what we could now say regarding Samaria. Five cities speak the holy language. The number five has its mysteries. The language of Canaan, Hebrew

and Syriac, is the mother and fount of all languages and is common in the East, and perhaps Adam lived there, too. The Chaldean language is a corrupted Hebrew. In this way, then, the Egyptians will be honored, that those who now not only do not speak our language but also hate us, that those who alone want to be the wisest and the best and consider their own language to be the best, will take refuge with us and assume our ways, forsaking and renouncing everything of their own that they now hold dear, both in wisdom and in eloquence. And in our language they will learn the hidden mysteries of God. (Luther)

**SWEAR ALLEGIANCE** – That is, they will worship as God Him whom the Jews worship in the land of Canaan. To vow and to swear are Hebrew ways of speaking and mean to bind oneself to God and have Him as one's God and worship Him. This pertains properly to swearing. One who confesses God is called one who swears by God. The psalm says (Ps. 63:11): "All who swear by Him shall glory," that is, all who confess Him. Those who now boast of their idols will boast and glory in the Lord of hosts. "In all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation," we read in Heb. 6:16. This is what it means to worship, to confess the Lord: rightly to use His name, namely, for the confirmation of the truth, as is done by an oath and by calling upon Him through faith in His promises and His truth. (Luther)

According to Josephus, a Jewish historian, the Jewish high priest Onias IV fled Jerusalem and came to Pharaoh, asking to build a temple in Egypt like the one in Jerusalem. He built a temple there, although it was much more like a castle and stood for about two hundred years, from 160 BC to AD 71. As interesting as that historical tidbit is, what is even more interesting is that Egypt had a substantial minority of Jews even before the time of Christ. Perhaps as early as 250 BC the Jewish community at Alexandria in Egypt translated the OT into Greek, a translation we call the Septuagint. After Christ, Christianity spread to Egypt and northern Africa. The later spread of Islam erased much of that history from western Christianity, but the believers in Egypt and northern Africa contributed a great deal to the early Christian church. The persistence of the Coptic church, a Christian church in Egypt, is a monument to the power of the gospel, as well as to the truthfulness of Isaiah's prophecy. (PBC)

But let's not get distracted by these things, as interesting as they may be. Isaiah tells us that Egyptians will be converted and will worship the Lord God of Israel. Since these believing Egyptians have come to the Lord, they will be treated just like God's own chosen people. (PBC)

**19:20** *sign and witness*. Cf. the purpose of the altar built near the Jordan River by the Transjordan tribes in Jos 22:26–27. (CSB)

The Word will be preached there, and they will flow to it as to a banner, and it will be a witness as of the Lord's presence. It will not be an altar for display as in Judea, but there will be other sacrifices and other incense, by which he cuts off

the sacrifice and incense of the Jews and suggests that they will come to an end. The witness was present among the Jews in the individual cities Where the Scripture was read. But the rites and sacrifices were only in the temple. That spiritual altar will be a sign of finding the Lord and a witness of teaching the people. (Luther)

THEY WILL CRY OUT THE LORD – Where the doctrine is sound, there is prayer and the Spirit of prayers. And where the Word of grace is, there follows cross and affliction. Therefore the Egyptians will cry, that is, they will be true Christians and will have the Word of grace and the work of grace, that is, prayer. (Luther)

Motif of the exodus is repeated here, but this time the Lord rescues the Egyptians. (TLSB)

*oppressors ... savior.* † The language of the book of Judges (see Jdg 2:18). The prophet has in mind the promised Son of the house of David (see 11:1–10). (CSB)

HE WILL RESCUE THEM – This should be understood as referring to spiritual deliverance. “Defender,” or, better, “master,” who will teach them and have authority over others and save them by the Word. The true Master is Christ. However, those who proclaim Christ are masters also. (Luther)

**19:21** *make himself known.* Cf. Ex 7:5. (CSB)

The goal of all interaction with the Lord is being achieved—that God would make Himself known to the people and they would know and serve Him (43:10; Jer 9:23–24; Php 3:10). (TLSB)

He will be revealed through the Gospel. They will worship Him with sacrifices. In any conflict, the superior position of Scripture must always be kept in mind. The Word once given by the Lord must be held fast if trial should come and the situation would appear to be otherwise. Know, Moses says, that “the Lord your God is testing you” (Deut. 13:3). Therefore God wants us to abide by His prior Word. When, therefore, it is said here that the Egyptians would speak the language of Canaan, swear by the Lord, cry to the Lord, and pray and do everything that is characteristic of Christians, it means that those sacrifices and gifts will be sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving and not ceremonies of the Law for the purpose of obtaining righteousness; for otherwise Christ would have died in vain and would be preached in vain. Also the sacrifices of the Christians are the mortification of their own bodies. Vows are the giving of thanks and praise, faith and clinging to Christ, and telling His wonderful works. The words of Ps. 18:49, “I will extol Thee, O Lord, among the nations,” were a vow of Christ. The vows of the Old Testament concerned themselves with external and temporal things, such as were in their power. The vows of the New Testament are to

commit oneself to Christ, to worship Him by faith, praise, and confession and praise. For God is not worshiped except by faith. Thus the field is cultivated for the sake of the produce. The believers humble and condemn themselves, but they proclaim and glorify Christ and His works. These are the vows of the New Testament. Civil vows have the emperor and the laws in view. Vows made in impossible things are ungodly and devilish, as are those made even in possible things for the purpose of being made righteous by means of their performance. (Luther)

*worship with sacrifices.* Offerings of foreigners are also mentioned in 56:7; 60:7 (cf. Zec 14:16–19). (CSB)

*vows.* They respond to God’s deliverance by pledging themselves to Him. Luther: “The vows of the Old Testament concerned themselves with external and temporal things, such as were in their power. The vows of the New Testament are to commit oneself to Christ, to worship Him by faith, praise, and confession and praise. For God is not worshiped except by faith. Thus the field is cultivated for the sake of the produce. The believers humble and condemn themselves, but they proclaim and glorify Christ and His works. These are the vows of the New Testament. Civil vows have the emperor and the laws in view. Vows made in impossible things are ungodly and devilish, as are those made even in possible things for the purpose of being made righteous by means of their performance” (AE 16:167). (TLSB)

**19:22** *strike Egypt with a plague.* Oppression (see v. 20) and plague were two common forms of divine affliction. Contrast the results of the plague on the firstborn in Ex 12:23. (CSB)

God disciplines Egypt that He may restore it. (TLSB)

*turn ... heal.* Cf. 6:10; here parallel to sending Egypt a “savior and defender” (v. 20). Earlier a hardhearted pharaoh had not turned to the Lord (Ex 9:34–35). (CSB)

Restore them as He sees fit. Cf Ex 15:26. (TLSB)

He will chastise them. Paul says (1 Cor. 11:32): “When we are judged by the Lord, etc.” “The Lord reproves him whom He loves” (Prov. 3:12; cf. Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). Therefore also the Egyptians will be God’s chosen children, but He will not turn them over to death. The Lord does not judge and afflict in order to destroy but in order to test and to help, and so that we may not become listless and lazy. The blow is therefore one of healing and conversion. When the ungodly are struck, they turn away. (Luther)

**19:23** *highway.* Cf. the highway to Jerusalem in 11:16 (see note there). For centuries Egyptians and Assyrians had fought each other (see 20:4), but in the

future they would be linked in a bond of friendship sealed by their common allegiance to the Lord (cf. 25:3). (CSB)

Egypt and Assyria are connected to the Lord's people (cf 35:8; 62:10). (TLSB)

This should be understood as referring to the publishing of the Gospel. There will be peace between those nations and agreement in faith and doctrine. It will be public. In unity of faith they will agree with Israel, and Israel with them. (Luther)

*worship together.* This description of peace and of unity in worship is similar to 2:2–4 (see note there; see also note on v. 21). (CSB)

Scope of the healing and restoration now extends from Egypt, across civilization, to the other major nation of the known lands. These enemies of Israel will begin to worship the Lord together. (TLSB)

**19:24–25** Incorporation of the nations is evident by the use of “My people” (cf 10:24; Ex 6:7; Hos 1:10) to describe Egypt and “the work of My hands” (cf Is 60:21; 64:8; Ps 138:8) to describe Assyria. Even long-standing foes will be welcomed (cf Mt 8:5; Lk 9:52). (TLSB)

**19:24** *blessing.* Those who have been blessed by God respond by being a blessing to others. (TLSB)

**19:25** *will bless them.* A fulfillment of Ge 12:3. (CSB)

*Egypt my people.* Such a universal vision seems possible for Isaiah only in the light of what has been said about the “shoot ... from the stump of Jesse” (11:1; see 11:1–10). Cf. 45:14; Eph 2:11–13. (CSB)

This is the prophet's effusiveness. This is, however, a very clear passage showing that the Jews will be equal to the Gentiles and vice versa. With the abolition of the Law, therefore, the Gospel concerning the grace of Christ will be preached to the heart for Gentiles as well as Jews, “and there will be one fold” (John 10:16). (Luther)

ISREAL MY INHERITANCE – Still designated thus as the actual son of the household of God and head of His family. Altogether, we have here a splendid example of the spread of the true religion under the merciful direction of God, especially in Messianic times. (Kretzmann)

All the nations belong to God, and people from all nations will be part of His kingdom. (TLSB)

Verses 23-25 sparkle with the promise of the NT church. Think of Pentecost, when “Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and

Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and Converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs” heard the gospel (Acts 2:9-11). (PBC)

**19:16–25** The Lord destroys Egypt with a purpose: the Egyptians will come to know the Lord and worship Him alone. The Lord will accomplish Egypt’s deliverance through both discipline and restoration. God carries out His saving work in the lives of people as He disciplines and heals them. Although no discipline is pleasant, we endure it as part of the Lord’s loving design for our salvation (Heb 12:5–11). The same God who delivered Israel from Egypt now offers deliverance to Egypt—and all people on earth—through Jesus Christ, the Savior. • Merciful Lord turn the hearts of those who do not know You, that they may rejoice in the Savior’s deliverance and worship You forever. Amen. (TLSB)