

Wednesday, August 30, 2023 • Read Isaiah 19–20

Questions from the Scripture text: Against whom is this burden (v1a)? Who is coming (v1b–c)? What does this do to Egypt and their idols (v1d–e)? What will happen to their unity (v2)? What will happen to their courage or wisdom (v3)? What will happen to them as a nation (v4)? What will happen to them agriculturally/economically (v5–10)? What will happen to the combined wisdom of their cities (v11–15)? What will happen to their combined courage (v16a, 17a)? Why (v16b, 17b)? What sorts of words will Egyptians come to speak in Hebrew (v18)? Who will worship YHWH where (v19)? To Whom will Egypt cry about what (v20)? What will He do about the enemy? What will He do between Himself and them (v21)? How does v22 summarize this? What happens to the war (v23–24)? How is this peace made (v25)? What happened to the Philistines of Ashdod who had allied themselves with Egypt (20:1)? What had Isaiah been wearing (v2)? What does the lord tell him to do now? How long does Isaiah do this (v3)? With whom is Ethiopia allied now? But what will happen to Egyptians and Ethiopians who pass back through Israel (v4)? What does this do to Israelites' hopes that Egypt and Ethiopia could save them (v5)? What does this lead them to conclude about all of their self-made plans (v6)?

What happens to hope in any deliverance other than the Lord? Isaiah 19–20 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord both makes other hopes for deliverance to fail, as well as surprising people from all nations by giving them hope and deliverance in Himself.**

The book of Isaiah as a whole begins with Israel's failure to trust in the Lord and be a light to the nations and moves toward the Servant's successful righteousness and reign, into which the nations come to be gathered. Israel's own pride to trust in themselves has come from the same Satanic root as Babylon (13:1–14:27), Philistia (14:28–32), Moab (ch15–16), Syria (ch17–18), and now Egypt (ch19–20). In the burden against Egypt, we again see what comes to man's pride.

Sudden judgment. 19:1. Israel was actually hoping that the Egyptian and/or Ethiopian efforts would succeed against Assyria (20:5). But here in v1, YHWH rides in on a swift cloud and lays Egypt and her idols low.

Powerless idols. v2–15. Egypt had many "traditional" idols, an entire pantheon of animal gods, nature gods, etc. But these are not the idols that totter and fall in this chapter. Egyptian unity, thousands of years sturdy through many dynasties, crumbles (v2). Egyptian wisdom, long the envy of much of the world (still the envy of much of the world!), fails (v3, 11–15). Egyptian economy, enriched for more than a millennium by Nile-fed agriculture, fails (v5–10).

These may not be what people traditionally think of as idols, but they are indeed some of man's longest standing idols! Do we not, today, worship our own united efforts, our learning/wisdom, and our economy/wealth?! How arrogant! The worshipers of these idols have repeatedly fallen throughout history.

All-powerful deliverer. v16–21. Egypt's frightened terror (v16a, 17a) comes at the mere waving of YHWH's hand (v16b). Whatever He determines against them (v17b) comes to pass. The amazing thing is that He doesn't destroy them all. In fact, He brings five cities-full of Egyptians to faith in Himself—even a city that was labeled for destruction (v18). YHWH brings them to worship Him (v19), to trust in Him and pray to Him for deliverance (v20), to know them and be known by them as their covenant God (v21).

Worldwide salvation. v22–25. v22 summarizes how the Lord brings Egyptians to Himself: He reveals His wrath, He heals from His wrath, and He brings to faith. Indeed, this is the only true peace: when the Lord saves unto Himself people even from such prior enemies as Egypt, Assyria, and Israel (v23–24). The world becomes one people with one Lord. He says of them, "My people... the work of My hands... My inheritance" (v25).

Historical sign. 20:1–6. In Isaiah so far, we have seen several instances where what the Lord announces for human history as a whole, He confirms it by giving a short-term example within history. And here the Lord does so again. He names a time period with a definite start date (v1–3). He gives his prophet a strikingly bizarre way to conduct himself during that time (v3). And precisely three years later, Israel beholds a trail of Egyptian and Ethiopian exiles "dressed" like the prophet as they are marched off to Assyria (v4). What is the point? To put their esteem of "world powers" to shame (v5). He forces them to come to Himself for deliverance by cutting off every other avenue of escape (v6).

What do you tend to trust in for safety, comfort, or happiness? Who ultimately gives all of these to you? What is it called when you trust in something else, or even in the means that He uses? What would it be merciful of Him to do to all other hopes? What means has He given us by which He may turn our hopes back to Him?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving men intelligence, diligence, and resources in Your common grace. Forgive us for when we are like Egypt. We do so often proudly think and feel as if our use of the means is what does us good. And so it is just and merciful of You to make us to fail. Grant that whenever we are ashamed of what we have thought and done, Your Spirit would drive us back to You. For You are the God Who saves even from Egypt and Assyria and Israel. And we look to You to save us, too, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH244 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah chapters, 19 and 20. These are God's words. The burden against Egypt. Behold your rights and a swift cloud and will come into Egypt. The idols of Egypt will taunt her at his presence. And the heart of Egypt will melt when it's midst. I will set Egyptians against Egyptians.

Everyone will fight against his brother and everyone against his neighbor city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst. And we'll destroy their council. They will consult the idols in the charmers, the mediums and the sorcerers. The Egyptians, I will give into the hand of a cruel master.

And if your skin will rule over them. Says the Lord yaha posts. The waters will fail from the sea and the river will be wasted and dried up. The rivers will turn foul. The brooks of defense. Will be emptied and dried up the reeds and Russians will wither the papyrus reads by the river.

By the mouth of the river and everything sown by the river. Will wither. Be driven away and be no more.

The fisherman also will more all those Will lament to cast hooks into the river and they will languish who spread nets on the water. More over those who work and find flax. Those who we find fabric will be ashamed and it's foundations will be broken. All who make wages will be troubled of soul.

Surely the princess of Zoan are fools. Pharaoh's wise counselors, give foolish council. How do you say to Farah high in the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they? Where are your wisemen? Let them tell you now, let them know. What your way of hosts has purposed against Egypt.

The princess of Zoan had become fools. The princess of North are to be saved. I've also deluded Egypt. Those who are the mainstay of its tribes. You always has mingled a perverse spirit and their midst and they have caused Egypt to air in all her work. As a drunken man, staggers in his vomit.

Neither will there be any work for Egypt? Which the head or tail palm branch of borus made you. And that day, Egypt, will be like women. And will be afraid to fear. Because of the waving of the hand of your hosts. Which he waves over it. When the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt, Everyone who makes mention of, it will be afraid in himself.

Because of the council of Yahweh of hosts, Which he has determined against. And that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan. And swear by your way of hosts. One will be called the city of destruction. And that day there will be an altar to the office in the midst of the land of Egypt.

And a pillar to Yahweh at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness To your hallway of hosts in the land of Egypt. They will cry to y'all, maybe because of the oppressors. And he will send them a savior. And a mighty one. And he will deliver them.

Then Yahweh will be known to Egypt. The Egyptians will know you all way in that day. And we'll make sacrifice and offering. Yes, they will make a vow to Yahweh in perform it? And y'all who was strike, Egypt. We will strike. And heal it. They will return to your way.

When he will be entreated by them. And heal them. And that day, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. And the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria. And the Egyptians will serve with. The Assyrians. And that day, Israel will be one of three with Egypt in this area.

A blessing in the midst of the land. Then you always hosts shall blessing. Blessed is Egypt, my people. And Assyria the work of my hands. And Israel, my inheritance. Then the year that Tartan became to astute. When Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, And they fought against Ashtart and took it.

At the same time. Yahwe spoke by eyes signed up a mod saying Go and remove the sackcloth from your body and take your sandals off your feet. And he did. So walking naked and barefoot. And you also said, just as my servant, Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot. Three years for a signed and a wonder.

Against Egypt and Ethiopia. So, so the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners. And Ethiopians as captives, young and old. Naked barefoot. With their buttocks and covered to the shame of Egypt. Then they shall be afraid and ashamed. Of Ethiopia their expectation. And Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day.

Surely such as our expectation. Wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria. And how shall we escape? So far the reading. Broads inspired. And And then into it.

Well. Where's the book of Isaiah? Not begin really with a A case that the lord was making against Israel. That, whereas he had. Done everything for them and given them. Opportunity to be his people and To bear, good fruit for him and to be a light to The nations.

They had done exactly the opposite. And then, What he's done more recently in the book up until this point Uh, well, oh And he gave. Um, Even in his Charge in his. Prosecution. Even in his prosecution against. Israel and Judah. He was promising. Uh, one who would not be like anywhere.

Is promising a king? It would be righteous a king, who would reign? A king who'd be like god in his character. Instead of like men and then, He turns to the nations. And he starts describing. The pride of the nations everyone trusting in themselves and their own plans and the things that they have, which

Excuse me.

And the things that they have, which are gifts from him. To begin with. So that we can see. That Israel's character. Is like the nation's character. You remember, at one point when he was especially talking about, he was talking about Babylon and Babylon. This, the greatest example, Of this pride.

He he told us about Where all this pride comes from that the nation's act like that because they are in the mold in the shape. Of the devil. Who fell by pride and would be utterly destroyed. And so, all who are pride proud? Will be utterly. Destroyed. And so, This pride trusting in ourselves this pride and trusting of Israel in itself and its plan came from the same satanic route as Babylon.

Babylon, sprite. Chapter 13 and most chapter 14 and Philistia. The end of chapter 14, in Moab chapter 15, and 16 and Syria. Last week in chapter 17 and 18. And now, We have the burden against Egypt and it's the same thing here. You see this? Sudden judgment y'all very rides on a swift cloud.

And will come into Egypt. Verse 1 and then The destroying. And terrifying and humiliating of Egypt verse 16. Just comes by the waving of the hand. Of Yahweh of hosts. And you remember, That this has been done before. That Moses would just lift a rod. And great destruction and devastation.

I'd come upon Egypt. But they had not learned. And the lord afflicts them in their idols. The idols of Egypt will taught her in his presence and the heart of Egypt will melt in its myths. No. When we were going through Exodus, And we considered the The plagues that the lord sent to show, Uh, both Israel and Egypt who he is.

The greatness of his glory. We saw how every one of the plagues was against. Some specific idol. That the Egyptians worshiped. But the Egyptian's greatest idol. Was not one of these traditional idols. Uh, you know, i Figure representing some animal or Uh, or creature the sun or Um, The Egyptian's great title was themselves.

With their own pride, their own. Uh, what they considered with wisdom? Their military strength, their economic strength. And this is what the lord afflicts them in. From verse 2 through 15. Egypt was proud of being. Uh, the longest standing world power and Of. Fairly significant degree of unity. Within the Egypt.

Now compared to other nations. For a long time but now Egyptians will be against Egyptians verse 2. Everyone will fight against his brother, everyone against his neighbors, city against city. And kingdom against kingdom. And so he attacks them. In that which they were proud. They're proud of their wisdom.

So, It says, the spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst. I will destroy their council. They will consult the idols, the charmers, the mediums, the sorcerers. And when they take all this council, they are going to be Defeated devastated, verse 4. The Egyptians, i will give Into the hands of a cruel master.

The fierce king will rule over the He turns their council to folly. Verse 11. Surely the princes of Zoan are fools. Pharaoh's wise counselors, give foolish council How do you say to Pharaoh? I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings. And so, he humiliates The humiliates them in their unity.

He humiliates them in. Their, their council, their cleverness, their wisdom, which Which even today. People are still amazed at things that the Egyptians learned and accomplished and new. And so forth, but the lord is going to humiliate their council. He's gonna humiliate. The Nile itself. And all of the agricultural and economic prosperity.

That had come to Egypt by way of the Mediterranean sea and its ports. And, The Nile. And it's tributaries. There's five waters will fail from the sea. Rivers will be wasted and dried up. The rivers will turn foul. This mirrors doesn't what the lord had done before. And turning the Nile to blood, he is the same lord attacking the same pride.

The brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up. The reeds and rushes will wither. The papyrus roots. By the river by the mouth of the river. Also. In. An indication or a symbol of egyptian learning and their paper. Everything, sown by the river will wither and be driven away and be no more.

All of the most fertile agricultural parts of egypt. That were That were irrigated by. Denial and aqueducts from the Nile. The fishermen will also a little more, those will lament to cast hooks into the river. They will unusually spread nets on the water. So, they lose the The, the fish and the food.

From the Nile. Those who work in fine, flax, and leave the line. We find fabric Will be ashamed, you know, even today. Egyptian cotton is Famous in the world. And the egyptians had a number of fabrics. That they produced that were Um, some of the finest in the world that they were proud of The lord's systematically, humiliating them and everything.

Of which they were proud. It destroys. Their wealth verse 10. He gives them over to folly. We already mentioned in verse 11. Through 13. Your way, verse 14 has mingled a perverse spirit and hermits. And they have caused egypt to air in all her work. And so, it's not just That there's no work to be done.

Let's that everything that anyone does in any part of the egyptian economy. Fails.

Yeah, and the lord. In the midst of all of this. What does he do? Well, not really in the midst. In advance, he sends this word from isaiah. So that, when it does come, They will know that it is. Yahweh of judah. Who has done this? And so, The land of judah.

Is a terror of a terror to egypt, because Of the council of yahweh of hosts. Which he has determined against it for 17. And how did they know that it was the council? Of y'all way of host because he had sent to them in verse 12 and said, Where are they?

Where your wise men? Let them tell you now. Let them know what your way of hosts as purposed. Against Egypt. This too was something that the lord had done before you remember, when the wise men couldn't even interpret a dream for her. With the lord had told Pharaoh head of time.

What would happen in egypt? And it happened, just as the lord said, well, the lord is coming and he saying, your wise, men, your counselors who are trying to understand all of a politics of the day, they're making predictions and telling you how to respond. But, here's a Son of a sheep farmer from.

Uh, from israel. And he is telling you with exact precision. What is going to happen? So isaiah's kind of assumed The neural of joseph. But here again, What the lord does in humiliating egypt isn't just for the destruction. Of those who upon whom he has avenging himself. But it is because he is redeeming for himself.

From among egypt, from among Assyria. From among israel. And so suddenly in verses 18 to 24, You have five cities in the land of egypt, speaking the language of command. Now ordinarily. This would be. Uh, because they have been conquered and humiliated and And forced to be ruled by another empire and accept.

Their policies and use their language. The way. Some people tongue in cheek, talk about how we had better, learn russian or we had better learned mandarin. Because of what the Lord may do. And suddenly giving this nation over, To her enemies, but that's not why they are learning hebrew.

They're learning hebrew and verse 18. Because they are going to swear by your way of hosts. And he is going to be their covenant. God. This altar and pillar in verse 19 aren't an altar and pillar for false worship. You remember when the Um,

Ruben and gad and half of Manassas on the East side of the Jordan. Had. Had erected an altar and Israel was going to go to war and they're like no no no no it's not an ultra for worship. It's an altar for a witness. To say we belong to the god who is on the other side of the border we belong to yahweh of at that time.

The tabernacle Verse 20 is saying the same thing about verse 19. Isn't it? And it will be for a sign and for a witness to all of hosts in the land of egypt. For they will cry to always say israel's god is our god and that's why they learn hebrew.

So they could worship god in the language of his people. Five cities of egypt doing this in verse 18, one of them Uh its name apparently comes from the fact that it was one of the great targets of the lord's devastation. It came to be called the city of destruction.

And yet god so redeems it that it becomes one of these cities that is full and united of those who will worship the lord. And he sends for egypt to savior, and the mighty one. Uh, so you have these highways from egypt to Assyria and egypt's egyptians going into a Syria and Assyrian's coming into egypt.

Um, in verses 18 through 24, but it's not describing. The war of that present day. Which is how you would normally hear that language. But it's describing the piece of the future to come. And which egypt, and Assyria and Israel. All three. Belong to the lord, and are his people, the lord using this amazing covenant language blessed as Egypt.

My people Blessed is a Syria. The work of my hands. Blessed is israel, my inheritance. In verse 25. So the lord strikes egypt. Yes. Humiliates egypt. Yes, but not just To destroy. Those upon whom he has avenging himself. But to bring to repentance. So that he may heal with salvation.

Those whom he is redeeming. And this he does for us all. And then in In chapter 20, he gives a short-term fulfillment of what he had said, in the first 17 verses of chapter 19. As a, a sign and a proof. That the long-term promise of salvation. But verses 18 through 25.

Of chapter 19 is absolutely certain. And so there's a day. On which he marks the day. And on that day, he tells isaiah. You know, take off the the morning clothes that you're wearing the sack lock. From your body in the sandals, off your feet and start going around naked and barefoot.

And that would be very shocking. Of course. To the people. And, He said. isaiah is going to do this. For three years. And then the day that he puts his sacloth and his sandals back on. You're going to see other people, naked and barefoot. And that's going to be ethiopians and egyptians and it came true.

So, the people were absolutely certain. The people of israel were. Because what happened is, they thought they were hoping that ethiopia and egypt would be strong enough powers to make an alliance against Assyria. And that that would that would end up saving israel, saving judah. Um, By the. Uh, by the balance of power.

The, that was created. But with Syria did. Capture and exile many ethiopians and Egyptians who on their way to Assyria would be led right through Judah and israel. And so the lord is giving them a sign. Of the certainty. That he is the one who is doing this justice.

He has said, But it's more about. The certainty that he is the god who offers redemption To those who turn to him to be healed. When he strikes them.

Septic. It is a mercy of god. If we are proud of ourselves, And trust in and find our safety in and our delight in and our purpose, in things that he has given us instead of in himself. There's a mercy of god when he makes those things to fail.

And we are humiliated in devastated, if He gives to us. To repent. To cry out to him. To be healed by him. So, let us In all of the difficulties of life. Use them as opportunities for repentance opportunities for faith. Opportunities to rejoice. In the blessedness, that is to come.

For those who cry out to him and belong to him. Particularly in the coming king, who has already been promised tonight? And who will be promised more? And i said, And whom we know. Is our lord jesus christ. And then, let's pray.

Her father. We thank you and praise you. That to a world of full of the proud.

By every right should have been utterly devastated. You have offered this salvation. Of being redeemed in the lord jesus christ. Help us. Oh lord, forgive us for so often. We have been proud. When we ask that you would give us, Humble hearts. That cry out to you. And our healed by you.

That know that all wisdom belongs to you and all power. And all provision. Belong to you. We pray for our own nation. That you would give it humility before you. Before it. Is destroyed. There's all other such proud nations have been. And yet, lord, more than that, we pray for each one of us.

That we would know you to be the god who is healed us. Even. Many of us being egyptians. And seeing that this was written. About your great mercy to us. And bless your name for it. We ask to see that. Mercy fulfilled. In jesus name. Amen.