

Isaiah 19:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

Analysis

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. The theophany (divine appearance) depicts Yahweh riding clouds—common Ancient Near Eastern imagery for storm gods, here applied to Israel's God demonstrating supremacy. God 'coming into Egypt' indicates direct intervention in a pagan nation's affairs. The idols 'moved' (tremble/shake) at His presence mocks their impotence—supposed gods terrified by the true God. Egypt's 'heart melts'—courage fails, morale collapses. This demonstrates Yahweh's universal sovereignty, extending beyond Israel to judge and control all nations. Reformed theology emphasizes God's absolute lordship over all creation, not merely covenant people.

Historical Context

This prophecy addresses Egypt's 25th Dynasty (Ethiopian) and subsequent periods of instability. Egypt had been a superpower for millennia, boasting thousands of deities. For a Hebrew prophet to announce Yahweh's sovereignty over Egypt was audacious—yet history validated it. Egypt experienced severe internal conflicts, foreign invasions (Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman), and declining power. The proud empire that enslaved Israel eventually submitted to foreign rule. Egyptian

religion, with its elaborate pantheon and rituals, was ultimately displaced by Christianity and Islam. The prophecy's fulfillment spanned centuries, demonstrating God's patient yet certain judgments on pagan powers.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Yahweh riding clouds into Egypt teach about His sovereignty over pagan nations?
2. How does idols trembling at God's presence mock false religion's impotence?
3. Why does God intervene directly in nations outside His covenant people?

Interlinear Text

עַל רֹכֶב מַשָּׁא
cloud rideth burden
H5645 H5921
Behold the LORD מִצְבֵּה יְהוָה
H3068 H2009
into Egypt מִצְבֵּה אֶלְעָזֶר
H4714 H4853

מִצְבֵּה אֶלְעָזֶר
into Egypt and the idols אלְעָזֶר
H4714 H457 H4714
upon a swift and shall come יְהִי מִצְבֵּה
H7031 H935 H4714
shall be moved יְהִי מִצְבֵּה
H5128

בְּקָרְבָּן
in the midst מִפְנֵי יְהִי
H7130 H4549 H4714
and the heart לִבְבָּן
H3824 H6440
at his presence מִצְבֵּה
H4714

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 12:12 (References Lord): For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

Revelation 1:7 (Parallel theme): Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Joel 3:19 (References Egypt): Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

Joshua 2:11 (References Lord): And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Ezekiel 30:13 (References Lord): Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 13:1 (Parallel theme): The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

Psalms 104:3 (Parallel theme): Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Jeremiah 50:2 (Parallel theme): Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

Jeremiah 51:44 (Parallel theme): And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

Deuteronomy 33:26 (Parallel theme): There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

