

Isaiah 19:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

Analysis

'Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.' God challenges Egypt: let their wise men explain divine purposes. The repeated 'where are they?' indicates absence or futility—either the wise men don't exist, or they're incompetent to understand God's plans. This sarcastic challenge demonstrates that human wisdom can't comprehend divine purposes without revelation. Egypt's counselors, despite education and tradition, cannot 'know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed'—they lack access to divine counsel. Only revealed knowledge provides genuine understanding of God's purposes. This anticipates Paul's teaching that God's wisdom appears as foolishness to worldly wisdom, yet worldly wisdom cannot grasp divine purposes (1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:14). True knowledge requires divine revelation, not merely human reasoning.

Historical Context

Throughout history, Egyptian counselors couldn't accurately predict or prevent national crises. Despite elaborate divination systems (reading animal entrails, astrology, dream interpretation), they failed to foresee invasions, famines, or political collapses. In contrast, Isaiah accurately prophesied specific events through divine revelation—Assyria's victories, Egypt's failures, Jerusalem's deliverance. This empirically validated revealed knowledge's superiority over human wisdom traditions. Church history shows this pattern continuing: secular

philosophies and worldviews repeatedly fail to explain reality or guide societies successfully, while biblical revelation provides accurate understanding of human nature, history's trajectory, and ultimate purposes. Revelation trumps speculation.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the challenge to Egypt's wise men teach about revealed versus speculative knowledge?
2. How does inability to know God's purposes demonstrate human wisdom's limits?
3. Why is divine revelation necessary for genuine understanding of history and reality?

Interlinear Text

לְהַנְּאָם אַיִם אַגְּדָה סְכָתִים יְהִי יְהָדָה
Where are they where are thy wise men and let them tell H4994 H0

עַל אַבָּא וְתִּלְדְּעָה מִה יְשַׁעַת יְהִי הַלְּבָדָה
thee now and let them know H4100 hath purposed what the LORD of hosts H5921
H3045 H3289 H3068 H6635

מִצְרַיִם:
upon Egypt
H4714

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 1:20 (Parallel theme): Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

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