

Isaiah 19:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

Analysis

'The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.' God actively sends confusion—a 'perverse spirit' (ruach ivim—spirit of distortions/perversity). This isn't mere human error but divine judgment causing intellectual and moral confusion. The simile of a drunk staggering in vomit vividly depicts complete disorientation and degradation. Egypt stumbles in 'every work'—comprehensive failure across all domains. This demonstrates a terrifying judgment: God can judicially harden hearts and confuse minds (Romans 1:24, 26, 28—'God gave them over'). When nations persistently reject truth, God may confirm them in delusion as judgment. Reformed theology recognizes God's sovereignty extends to judicial hardening—not causing initial sin, but giving rebels over to sin's consequences, including confused thinking.

Historical Context

Egyptian decision-making during this period was indeed as if drunk—inconsistent alliances, contradictory policies, failed military campaigns, civil wars. Leaders couldn't effectively analyze situations or execute coherent strategies. This wasn't merely incompetence but appeared as divinely-induced confusion. Historically, nations persistently rejecting divine truth do experience increasing confusion—losing ability to think clearly about fundamental realities. Modern parallels include civilizations descending into moral and intellectual confusion after rejecting

Christian foundations—unable to define basic categories, making catastrophically bad policy decisions. The vomit imagery emphasizes degradation—not noble failure but shameful collapse. Egypt's proud civilization reduced to disgusting confusion validated this harsh prophetic image.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does God sending a perverse spirit teach about judicial hardening as judgment?
2. How does the drunkard imagery illustrate complete moral and intellectual disorientation?
3. What modern examples demonstrate nations descending into confusion after rejecting truth?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה הַ	מִסֵּךְ	בְּקִרְבֵּהּ הַ	רוּחַ	עֹשֶׂה יָם	כְּהִתְעַוֵּת וְאִתְּ	
The LORD	hath mingled	in the midst	spirit	a perverse	man staggereth	H853
H3068	H4537	H7130	H7307	H5773	H8582	
	מִצֵּר יָם	בְּכָל	מַעֲשֵׂה הוּא	כְּהִתְעַוֵּת וְאִתְּ		
	thereof and they have caused Egypt	H3605	in every work	man staggereth		
	H4714		H4639	H8582		
שֶׁכֶּר וּרְ	בִקְיָאוֹ:					
thereof as a drunken	in his vomit					
H7910	H6892					

Additional Cross-References

2 Thessalonians 2:11 (Parallel theme): And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Job 12:25 (Parallel theme): They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

Jeremiah 25:27 (References Lord): Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

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