

Isaiah 19:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

Analysis

'Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.' Complete paralysis—no work for anyone, regardless of position. 'Head or tail' represents leadership versus lowest classes. 'Branch or rush' represents strong versus weak. Normally societies function through differentiated roles, but under divine judgment, everyone is equally helpless. This describes totalitarian paralysis when entire social systems collapse. Neither high nor low, strong nor weak can accomplish anything. This demonstrates divine judgment's equalizing effect—normal social distinctions proving meaningless under comprehensive disaster. All human hierarchies are contingent; when God removes blessing, even the greatest fall and the strong become weak. This anticipates eschatological judgment where earthly status won't matter—only relationship with God determines destiny.

Historical Context

Egypt's historical collapses indeed saw this pattern—periods when neither pharaoh nor peasant could function effectively. Intermediate periods between dynasties show comprehensive social breakdown: central authority collapsed, provinces feuding, economy failing, civilization reduced to survival mode. Neither skill, position, wealth, nor strength provided security. Archaeological evidence shows civilization's material decline during such periods—fewer monuments built, cruder artifacts, population loss. Modern examples include societies collapsing under war, famine, or tyranny, where normal social functions cease and everyone,

regardless of former status, struggles merely to survive. God's judgments can reduce proud civilizations to such states.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does paralysis affecting all social levels teach about human hierarchies' contingency?
2. How does comprehensive social collapse demonstrate normal status distinctions' meaninglessness under judgment?
3. What does this typologically teach about eschatological judgment transcending earthly positions?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	יְהִי הָ	לְמִצְרַיִם	מַעֲשֵׂה הָ	יַעֲשֶׂה הָ	אֲשֶׁר	רַ
H3808	H1961	for Egypt	Neither shall there be any work	H834	may do	H6213
		H4714	H4639			
רֹאשׁ	זֶנֶב	כֹּפֶה הָ	אֶגְמוֹן:			
which the head	or tail	branch	or rush			
H7218	H2180	H3712	H100			