

Isaiah 19:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.

Analysis

'In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.' Future conversion of Egyptian cities to worship Yahweh. 'Language of Canaan' means Hebrew, but figuratively indicates adopting Israelite faith and covenant relationship. 'Swear to the LORD' indicates covenant commitment. This eschatological vision sees Egyptian cities becoming worshippers of Israel's God. 'The city of destruction' is textually uncertain—some manuscripts read 'city of the sun' (Heliopolis), others 'city of destruction' (perhaps ironic renaming). Either way, the prophecy envisions widespread Egyptian conversion. This demonstrates God's redemptive purposes extend beyond judgment to salvation—even judged nations will eventually worship Him. Reformed theology sees this as prefiguring Gentile inclusion in the covenant, fulfilled in the multi-ethnic Church.

Historical Context

Historical fulfillment included Jewish communities in Egypt (Elephantine, Alexandria), and eventually widespread Egyptian Christian conversion. By the 4th century CE, Egypt was largely Christian—famous for producing church fathers (Athanasius, Cyril, Anthony), monasticism, and theological schools. The 'five cities' likely symbolizes significant presence rather than literal five. Egyptian Orthodox Christianity remained strong until Islamic conquest (7th century), and Coptic Christians continue as minority. The prophecy demonstrated God's heart for all

nations—even proud Egypt that enslaved Israel would eventually worship Israel's God. This partial historical fulfillment anticipates complete fulfillment when all nations worship Christ (Revelation 7:9).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does Egyptian cities speaking Hebrew and worshipping Yahweh teach about God's redemptive purposes?
2. How did Egyptian Christianity partially fulfill this prophecy?
3. In what ways does this prefigure the multi-ethnic Church including all nations?

Interlinear Text

בֵּי יוֹם	הָהּ וְאֵלֶּי	יְהוָה	חֲמִשָּׁה	עַל יֶרֶךְ	בְּאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם
In that day	H1931	H1961	shall five	The city	in the land	of Egypt
H3117			H2568	H5892	H776	H4714
מְדַבְּרוֹת	שֶׁפֶת	כְּנָעַן	וְנִשְׁבַּע	לַיהוָה	צָבָא	וְאֵלֶּי
speak	the language	of Canaan	and swear	to the LORD	of hosts	
H1696	H8193	H3667	H7650	H3068	H6635	
עַל יֶרֶךְ	הָהּ הַסֵּ	יֵאמָר	לְאֶחָת:			
The city	of destruction	shall be called	one			
H5892	H2041	H559	H259			

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 3:9 (References Lord): For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

Isaiah 19:21 (References Lord): And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

Zechariah 2:11 (References Lord): And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Isaiah 11:11 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Jeremiah 12:16 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.