

Isaiah 19:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

Analysis

'And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.' Egypt's 'spirit' (ruach—breath, spirit, courage, morale) fails—collective confidence collapses. God destroys their 'counsel' (etsah—plans, wisdom, strategy), indicating intellectual/planning capacity vanishes. Desperate, they multiply religious activity—consulting idols, charmers (whisperers), mediums (familiar spirits), and wizards (knowing ones). This intensified occultism demonstrates that crisis drives people toward spiritual solutions, but apart from true revelation, they grasp futile alternatives. The proliferation of sources (idols, charmers, mediums, wizards) indicates confusion and desperation—frantically seeking help everywhere except from the true God. This illustrates that false religion multiplies most when earthly securities fail.

Historical Context

Egypt was famous for magic, divination, and occult practices. Exodus depicts Egyptian magicians opposing Moses (Exodus 7-8). Egyptian papyri preserve countless spells, incantations, and magical texts. In crisis periods, such practices intensified—archaeological evidence shows increased magical papyri, amulets, and curse tablets during unstable periods. Yet none of these practices could prevent

Egypt's decline. The prophecy mocks religion divorced from truth: spectacular diversity of spiritual practices accomplishing nothing. Only truth—revealed knowledge of the living God—provides genuine help. This validated Yahweh as superior to Egypt's entire magical/religious complex.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does crisis intensify religious activity yet often not lead to the true God?
2. What does the multiplication of spiritual sources (idols, charmers, mediums, wizards) reveal about spiritual confusion?
3. How does Egypt's futile occultism demonstrate that only true revelation provides genuine spiritual help?

Interlinear Text

וְנִכְחַק הַרְוחַ מִצְבֵּחַ בְּקָרְבֵּן יְמִינֵךְ יְמִינֵךְ הַרְוחַ
shall fail And the spirit of Egypt in the midst the counsel
H1238 H7307 H4714 H7130 H6098

אָבֶל שׁ וְאָבֶל שׁ וְאָבֶל שׁ וְאָבֶל שׁ
thereof and I will destroy thereof and they shall seek to the idols
H1104 H1875 H413 H457 H413

וְאָל בְּאָטִים וְאָל בְּאָטִים וְאָל בְּאָטִים
and to the charmers and to them that have familiar spirits and to the wizards
H328 H178 H413 H413

בְּקָדְעַנִּים:
and to the wizards
H3049

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 8:19 (Spirit): And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Daniel 2:2 (Parallel theme): Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

1 Chronicles 10:13 (Spirit): So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

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