

Isaiah 19:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.

Analysis

'The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.' Continuing the ecological disaster: vegetation by waterways withers and disappears. The threefold description emphasizes completeness: withering (dying), driven away (wind-blown after death), and 'be no more' (complete disappearance). Agriculture 'sown by the brooks' fails—crops dependent on irrigation vanish. This depicts famine conditions—not just reduced harvest but total agricultural failure. Reformed covenant theology recognizes that fertility is a covenant blessing (Deuteronomy 28:4, 11) and barrenness a covenant curse (Deuteronomy 28:17-18, 38-40). While Egypt wasn't in direct covenant with God, the same creation principles apply: rebellion against the Creator produces barrenness; alignment with divine order produces fruitfulness. Egypt's idolatry and opposition to God's purposes brings curse.

Historical Context

Egyptian agriculture's dependence on Nile flooding meant crop failures during low-water years could be catastrophic. Historical records document famines causing social collapse, civil war, and cannibalism during severe periods. The prophecy describes such conditions—agriculture failing, people driven away (migration due to famine), regions depopulated. While not permanent (Egypt continued to exist), these cycles of collapse validated the prophecy. The Ptolemaic

and Roman periods show Egypt declining from wealthy independent civilization to exploited province. Agricultural productivity increasingly served foreign rulers rather than domestic population, fulfilling the spirit of judgment even if not literal permanent desolation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does agricultural failure teach about creation order blessing obedience and cursing rebellion?
2. How do covenant principles (blessing/curse) apply to nations outside formal covenant relationship?
3. Why is fertility/barrenness a key indicator of relationship with the Creator?

Interlinear Text

עֵדָה וְתַּחַת עַל	עַל יְאֵר	עַל גַּם	יְאֵר וְתַּחַת	וְתַּחַת
The paper reeds	by the brooks	by the mouth	by the brooks	
H6169	H5921	H2975	H6310	H2975
מִצְבָּע	יְאֵר	יְיַבֵּשׁ	נַפְלָא	וְתַּחַת
and every thing sown	by the brooks	shall wither	be driven away	
H4218	H2975	H3001	H5086	H369

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