

represents as the great enemy of God. He depicted great armies preparing to attack it, and foretold the complete destruction of the realm of wickedness and evil. In striking contrast chapter 19 contains no specific mention of foreign attack upon Egypt, nor does it predict its destruction as a result of foreign conquest. It predicts that the Lord will stir up dissension and strife within the land, and that He will withdraw the bounty of nature, causing economic and industrial chaos, bringing the counsel of the leaders to nought, and sending fear into the hearts of the people. All this leads up to portrayal of a change in the attitude of the people so that they are no longer enemies of God, but actually become His own people (v. 25).

It is not necessary to assume any chronological progression in this first part of the chapter. There is a general picture of calamities which will occur during the subsequent history of Egypt, arranged in logical rather than chronological fashion. It is as if we were to say to a nation: "That country will have confusion and upheaval; civil war will break out; its factories will close; its crops will fail; its industries will shut down." A long perspective of future trouble is gathered into one brief picture. Looking back over the history of Egypt it is easy for us to see at one point or another the exact fulfillment of every one of the details which are heaped together in the first sixteen verses.

Until the time of Isaiah, Egypt usually ranked as one of the greatest powers in the world. Within the next century and a half it sank to lesser rank, and has never since enjoyed its former greatness.

The Lord Himself to Go to Egypt

Verse 1 is interesting. In contrast to the general situation, where the people of Judah are sending tribute down to Egypt in order to get Egyptian help and protection against Assyria (see 30:1-7, especially v. 6; also 31:2-3), God pictures Himself as going down into Egypt upon a cloud. Of course His purpose is not to seek protection, but to show His superiority to the idols of Egypt; at His presence the heart of Egypt shall melt.