

destroy Egypt but to change it into a place where He will be worshipped and loved -- a place where His mercy will show itself abundantly.

No indication is given of the time when this will be fulfilled. As we have seen, the phrase "in that day," really means, "in the day of which I am about to speak." It might be paraphrased as "a time will come when --."

The last three verses of the chapter show that God's mercy, which has now been shown to apply to Egypt as well as to Israel, will not be confined even to this larger area. In these three verses the two great empires of that day are brought into one focus. God will not simply destroy Egypt and Assyria -- He will convert them to Himself. Even the wicked aggressor, the land of Assyria, can find a place in His mercy. There will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria; peaceful intercourse will be established between the two nations; together they will serve the Lord.

Israel, formerly but a small and insignificant nation when compared to these mighty empires, will assume a vital place beside the great world powers. It will be "a blessing in the midst of the land." It is the place where God's Word is being written and where He will bring His Son into the world. Israel is to be the third with Egypt and Assyria, and there will be blessing for all of them. God will pour out His love on the great empires and on Israel. He calls Egypt His people, Assyria the work of His hands, and Israel His inheritance.

Of course the conclusion is clear, that God will pour out His blessing upon all the nations of the earth. His kingdom will cover the entire world, and all through the world people will praise and glorify Him for His wonderful goodness. What a wonderful promise God has given! May we not look forward with joy and hope to the fulfillment of this wonderful promise.

Thus the latter part of the chapter deals with the turning of Egypt to God. We have already seen that the conversion of Ethiopia is described in the last verse of the previous chapter. Similarly this chapter ends, not like the burden of Babylon with a message of destruction for the great hostile world powers, but rather with a description of their conversion into members of the family of God.