

Text: Isaiah 19:1-25

Title: "Egypt's miraculous day"

Time: 5/17/2026 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: John Bunyan was a 17th century English Baptist forefather in the faith, who was severely persecuted for his stand for Jesus Christ. While serving his time in the Bedford jail, he authored *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which has been purchased an estimated 250 million times, making it second only to the Bible in total sales.

A lesser-known work of Bunyan's is a sermon he once preached on the text of Luke 24:47, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Bunyan titled his message, "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved," and his subtitle was "Good News for the Vilest of Men."

Bunyan saw good news for the vilest of men in his text because there Jesus commanded his apostles to start their worldwide gospel ministry in the city of Jerusalem – "beginning at Jerusalem." That was the city that had just rejected and crucified Him. It was the city that had confessed to Pilate that they had no king but the Roman Caesar. It was the city that had made God's house of prayer a robbers' den. It was the city that always killed God's prophets and stoned those whom God sent to it. True to form, it was the city that produced the first Christian martyr.

And yet, Jesus wanted New Testament gospel preaching to begin there. For Bunyan, this was truly good news for the vilest of men. Bunyan saw that the Jerusalem sinner saved was the salvation of the very hardest case. Saul of Tarsus was certainly one such case. After his salvation, now renamed as the Apostle Paul, he looked back on the day Jesus saved him as the day that the Lord demonstrated His power to save the

very chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). He was one who had helped murder the first Christian martyr.

Isaiah celebrates this same saving power in this inspired sermon, which he titles, "A burden for Egypt" (v. 1). That Isaiah would be burdened for Egypt is remarkable. Egypt was the land of Israel's enslavement. It was the country that Moses's ten plagues ultimately destroyed before they would let God's people go. It was Egypt's hatred for Israel that plunged them greedily into the parted Red Sea, never to return back again. And now in Isaiah 19, it is Egypt whom God first judges, and then restores as a saved nation. And by the way, God does so for Assyria too. They were no friend to Isaiah's Judah.

This amazing miracle happens on what the prophet calls "that day" (vv. 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24). I have titled the message this morning, "Egypt's miraculous day." This is a day that Isaiah anticipates as still future from his perspective. His burden for Egypt is a prophetic prediction that this day will come and that all he says about this day will be fulfilled.

What is less clear is whether this day is still future from our perspective this morning. Those who believe that we are presently living in this day must find allegory and symbolism in this passage in places where I do not think it exists.

For example, Isaiah predicts that a highway will extend from Egypt to Assyria (v. 23). There has never yet been such a highway constructed, so I conclude that it must yet be built in the future, but one commentator said this about that highway: "Isaiah merely uses a figure; he is not speaking of a literal or actual road extending between the two countries. The two once hostile nations will engage in friendly and brotherly intercourse, a fact which is symbolized by their travelling over the road from one country to the other" (Young, 43). That is an orthodox conclusion, but I do not think it is what Isaiah had in mind when he wrote here about this highway.

Isaiah also predicts that the water of the Nile River will be dried up (v. 5). This, of course, has not happened since the days of Isaiah, so here too I come to the conclusion that we are reading in Isaiah 19 about a day that is still future to us.

Another commentator, however, concludes differently about the dry Nile: "The drying up of the Nile (5) is a figurative description of coming economic decay" (Motyer, 165). Yet the reason that supposed "figure" works so well is because nothing can create literal economic decay in Egypt quite like the literal drying up of the Nile. Again, I think Isaiah believed the Nile would dry up when his prophecy is fulfilled.

Biblically, the one predicted event that has the power to dry up the Nile is the third of the trumpet judgments of the Great Tribulation period (Rev. 8:10-11). The Lord destroys a third of the waterways of the earth in that judgment. I believe this third trumpet helps us understand when in the future the fulfilment of this prophecy about the Nile will happen. It will happen during and through the Great Tribulation judgments.

Another hint that we must look to these end times for Isaiah's fulfilment is the way he describes the Lord's coming to judge Egypt at the beginning of the chapter. The Lord is said to be riding on a quick cloud as he causes the idols of Egypt to tremble (v. 1, KJV: "be moved"). Here, of course, Isaiah uses a literary device to say that both the demons behind the idols and those worshipping their idols will tremble when the Lord comes. The wood idols themselves do not tremble in fear. There are parallels here with NT prophecy of the rapture.

When Paul wrote of the rapture of the church prior to the Great Tribulation, he mentioned that the Lord would come in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught

up together with them *in the clouds*, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Note also that Isaiah’s cloud is a swift or quick cloud. Paul also tells us that our rapture in the clouds will happen very quickly: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In *a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

Finally, Isaiah mentions trembling. The rapture of the church is going to cause trembling in places like idolatrous Egypt. The young Thessalonian church trembled over the false teaching they had been given, which claimed that the rapture had happened already and that they had somehow missed it. Paul wrote to reassure them, “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon *shaken in mind, or be troubled*, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (2 Thess. 2:1-2). To be left behind by the rapture is to be shaken, to tremble.

So, for these reasons and others, I believe that Egypt’s miraculous day described here by Isaiah is a day that is still future, and it is a period that involves two related but separate works of the Lord, His judgment of Egypt during the Great Tribulation and His restoration of Egypt as a nation during the millennial kingdom of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, at His Second Coming. Isaiah calls this twofold future work the Lord’s *smiting* Egypt and His *healing* Egypt (v. 22). The striking of judgment must come first, but it results in the healing of a wonderful restoration. Those two works organize Isaiah’s message into two sections.

I. Egypt’s miraculous day is a day when the Lord’s judgment strikes her (vv. 1-17).

1. Egypt is struck with the loss of courage (v. 1). When God's judgment strikes a nation, the nation loses courage. Isaiah says, "the heart of Egypt will melt." That is a loss of courage. The word *melt* describes what happened to the ungathered manna under the hot sun in Exod. 16:21. Rahab used this word telling the spies of Israel that Jericho's heart melted when they heard about Israel (Josh. 2:11). She added, "neither did there remain any more courage in any man." Loss of courage happens when God begins to judge a nation.

Illustration: From a hill near her farm, Abigail Adams and her young son John Jr. could see the smoke rising from Charlestown during the Battle of Bunker Hill. A week later she wrote to her husband of her commitment to courage as the Revolutionary War came closer. She included a prayer: "Tis expected they will come out over the neck tonight, and a dreadful Battle must ensue. Almighty God, cover the heads of our countrymen, and be a shield to our dear friends."

John wrote back to encourage her bravery: "It gives me more pleasure than I can express to learn that you sustain, with so much fortitude, the shocks and terrors of the times. You are really brave, my dear, you are an heroine. And you have reason to be. For the worst that can happen, can do you no harm. A soul, as pure, as benevolent, as virtuous and pious as yours has nothing to fear, but everything to hope and expect from the last of human evils." From our founding, courage has been God's blessing on our nation. When God judges, it disappears.

God strikes the nation of Egypt with other judgments as well:

2. The loss of unity (v. 2). Our nation has known the judgment of civil war. We may know it again.
3. The exchange of patriotism for paganism (v. 3). Each nation possesses a spirit of patriotism that must not fail. In our country, patriotism wanes as paganism prevails.
4. The loss of freedom (v. 4). John Adams would be shocked at the amount of freedom we have forfeited to bureaucrats.

5. The loss of prosperity (vv. 5-10). The young Adams family owned their own farm. Inflation makes that impossible for many young American families today.
6. The loss of competent leadership (vv. 11-15). Where today is the greatness of our founding fathers in Washington?
7. The loss of security (vv. 16-17).

It is still true that blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the Lord of hosts who deals with Egypt here. And this is true of nations because it is first true of citizens and of homes and of churches, which make up those nations. Who is our God? Is He Isaiah's Lord? Have we sought His blessing on us that we might possess great courage, unity, patriotism, freedom, prosperity, competent leadership, and security as only this one true God, the Lord of hosts, can give to us?

II. Egypt's miraculous day is a day when the Lord's salvation has healed her (vv. 18-25).

Illustration: To be healed is to be restored to good health. God can do this with a nation, and He will do so with Egypt in a number of ways.

1. Common language with the Promised Land (v. 18a).

Illustration: For an immigrant to be naturalized as a U.S. citizen, he must be at least 18 years old, be of good moral character, and be able to read, write, and speak basic English.

Application: I think Isaiah would have seen the wisdom of that last requirement. He emphasizes first that, when the day of Egypt's restoration as a saved people comes, they will speak the same language as is spoken in the Promised Land of Canaan. I think this will be Hebrew. One of the five will be called "the City of Destruction." The word *destruction* in Hebrew is only a tittle different from the word for Heliopolis, an Egyptian city known in Isaiah's day as the center of the

worship of the sun. That city will be called the City of Destruction to commemorate the way the one true God destroyed idolatry there.

In addition to this victory, the Lord's salvation restores this nation to

2. allegiance to the Lord of hosts (v. 18b).
3. thanksgiving for a Savior (vv. 19-20).
4. worship of the Lord (vv. 21-22).
5. Israel-centered world peace (vv. 23-25).

This is the future of Egypt, Assyria, and Israel. They shall be the Lord's people, the work of the Lord's hands, and the Lord's inheritance. Their glorious future can be our future too. We can be the Lord's people: "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God" (Rom. 9:26). We can be the work of His hands: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). And we can be the Lord's inheritance: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). The firstborn, God's Son, will get His inheritance, His many brothers and sisters. You and I can be one of them.

Conclusion: Bunyan preached about the Jerusalem sinner saved. Isaiah preached about the sinful nation of Egypt restored and filled with saved people. What might be preached about you and me? Have we had our miraculous day?

If God's grace is powerful enough to do what Isaiah says it shall do in the salvation of Egypt and Assyria, then it is powerful enough to save each one of us no matter the depth of our sin. Salvation is by grace through faith, and not earned by works. Christ has died, and that is enough.

Perhaps you are a believer this morning, but there is someone in your life whom you view as hopeless when it comes to salvation. You have seen them reject your witness over and over, and this is your burden for them.

Isaiah's burden for Egypt tells us something important about our burden for people like that. It tells us that if there is hope for Egypt, and there certainly is, then there is hope for the one about whom we are burdened this morning.

Keep on praying, keep on witnessing, keep on trusting that the gospel is God's power to save. Perhaps someday, as Isaiah and we walk together on that highway from Egypt to Assyria, discussing again together the miracle of this chapter 19, that one whom we think is hopeless will be walking there with us if we remain faithful in our gospel ministry now.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*