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## Blessed Be Egypt, Assyria and Isra'el

### 19: 23-25

**Blessed be Egypt, Assyria and Isra'el DIG: What does the highway motif indicate about the restored fellowship between Egypt, Assyria, and Isra'el (also see 11:16 and 40:3-4)? How would Isaiah's fellow Jews feel about the Assyrians? What effect would hearing 19:25 have on them? What does that show about God's attitude toward other nations?**

**REFLECTION: Egypt and Assyria represent all the nations (see 2:2-4 and Revelation 7:9-11). What then do these verses imply about God's relationship to the world? Therefore, how will you pray for the world?**

**In that day** once again points to **the far eschatological future** in the Millennial Kingdom. In a remarkable statement **Isaiah** sees the end of the ancient hostility between **Assyria** and **Egypt**. No more will **Isra'el** be merely a pawn between these warring powers. Now she will take her place beside them to fulfill the ancient promise: **and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you** (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Dt - I Will Bless Those Who Bless You and Whoever Curses You I Will Curse**). Nor will **God's** blessing be for **her** alone. It will be impartially given out to **all** nations.<sup>60</sup>

Here **Isaiah** deals with the union of three previous enemies: **Isra'el, Egypt** and **Assyria**. **Assyria** today is Iraq and a small portion of Syria. Iraq covers a huge area, which includes ancient Babylonia and **Assyria**. Modern Syria extends further out, which includes parts of ancient **Assyria**. There will be three types of unions: an **economic union**, a **religious union**, and a **blessing aspect to the union**.

**The economic union: Isaiah** speaks of a **highway** out of **Egypt to Assyria**. **In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria (19:23a)**. A **highway** is a favorite metaphor in **Isaiah** for the removal of alienation and separation (**11:16, 33:8, 35:8, 40:3, 49:11, 62:10**). In the rough and hilly country of **Isra'el**, this could be easily understood. **Isaiah's** message was clear. Do not make a **highway**, or an

alliance, with **Egypt** to escape from **Assyria**. **Isaiah** emphasizes that Judah's only hope, and in reality **Egypt's** only hope, is in **ADONAI**.



What was unquestionably the most important **highway** in the ancient world is sometimes referred to as the Great Trunk Road; it passed from **Egypt** to Babylonia and to frontiers beyond and vitally linked each part of the Fertile Crescent in all periods. This **highway** began at Memphis, near the base of the Nile delta, and passed **the Egyptian** towns of Ra and Sile before arriving at Gaza. Gaza was an important **Egyptian** provincial capital, and it sometimes served as a launching pad for **Egyptian** campaigns through Palestine and Syria. This southern-most sector of the **highway** was of paramount importance to **Egyptian** security; it was the *way of Horus* in **Egyptian** literature. In the Bible this segment of the road was known as the way to the land of the Philistines' (**Exodus 13:17**).<sup>61</sup> Since 1948 the Great Trunk Road has been cut off from both **the Egyptian** border on the south and the Syrian border on the north. But when this union is established, the "way of Horus" will be reopened and once again there will be **a highway** between these three nations.

**The religious union:** There will also be a religious union, because **they** will worship the same **God**. **The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together (19:23b)**. **People** in these two nations, bitter enemies in **Isaiah's** day, **will worship together**.

**The blessing aspect to the union:** **In that day Isra'el will be the third nation, along with Egypt and Assyria, which will be a blessing on the earth. ADONAI-Tzva'ot will bless them, saying: Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance (19:24-25)**. The titles **My people, My handiwork, and My inheritance** always belonged to **Isra'el (Second Samuel 3:18; Isaiah 29:22; Psalm 28:9)**. But during the Messianic

Kingdom, they will be shared.

In a remarkable statement, **Isaiah** applies terms previously restricted to **Isra'el** to both **Egypt** and **Assyria**. He calls **Egypt, My people (10:24, 43:6-7; Hosea 1:10, 2:23; Jeremiah 11:4)** and **Assyria, My handiwork (Isaiah 60:21 and 64:8; Psalms 119:73 and 138:8)**. It is true that the favorite term, **My inheritance**, is reserved for **Isra'el (Deuteronomy 32:9)**, but the claim that this term gives a slightly special standing to **Isra'el** is an argument from silence. In fact, **Assyria, Egypt** and the rest of **the earth** will also be the recipients of **blessing in that day**, the Millennium.

Compare this passage with **Ezeki'el 29:13-16**. Combining what **Isaiah** has to say, and what **Ezeki'el** has to say, we see that at the end of the Tribulation **Egypt** undergoes a national conversion. Yet, because of their previous history of continuous hatred against **Isra'el**, during the first forty years of the Millennial Kingdom, **the Egyptians** will be dispersed among the peoples of the earth. **Egypt** will be deserted during this time. Then after forty years there will be a regathering of all **the Egyptians**. But **Egypt** will never again be a kingdom ruling over other nations.

The underlying point in this section is that if **Isra'el** trusts in **Egypt** to protect **her** instead of **God**, **she** will be prostituting **her** ministry to **Egypt**. Instead, **she** is to be the vehicle whereby those very nations can turn to **her God** and become partners with **her** in service to **Him** and enjoy **His** blessings.<sup>62</sup>