

## Speaking the Language of Canaan

A great Bible teacher once said in his advancing age, “The older I get, the less I know about Bible prophecy.” In truth, he was expressing that he was learning more. He was saying the worldwide events of the future he studies about in the Bible do not always match his previously formed ideas. I understand and concur with his delightful, but often frustrating conclusion. In recent study of Isaiah 19, I see God lay out the future restoration of Egypt in the kingdom to come on earth. Actually, it is refreshing to know that during the golden era of the Kingdom of God to one day be established upon the earth, our loving Lord has made provision for not only Gentiles, but those Gentile nations that were so blatantly opposed to Him, His council, plans and purposes. But in the Kingdom to come, he shall capture Egypt for Himself and His glory!

In Isaiah 19 we see the Egyptians in their base human nature trying to find answers to their problems. The Bible says, “*And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards*” (Isaiah 19:3). God declares He will put to naught the wisdom of their counselors before their eyes, telling them, in essence, these “wise men” do not have your answer. God says to Egypt in holy sarcasm, “*Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt*” (Isaiah 19:12). God also delivered Egypt over to an unkind national leadership as a tool to bring them to the God who is love and cares for those who ultimately trust in Him. “*And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts*” (Isaiah 19:4). God embraces Egypt first with the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 19:16,17). Next, God meets them at the altar that shall be constructed in Egypt (Isaiah 19:19). Then God in His mercy sends them salvation and deliverance (Isaiah 19: 19, 20). And their deliverance is very much contingent with the fact that Egypt will develop a deep relationship with the Lord, as is always the case with any people, any place, any time. Relationship is the key factor, in other words, loving God not because you have to, but because you want to (Isaiah 19:21). The “happily-ever-after” ending comes and the nation of Egypt is healed (Isaiah 19:22). Those people who for centuries have stood against the Lord, one day will be a people who are destined to worship Him.

There is a compelling phrase that rises up out of Isaiah 19, verse 18 that has captured my attention. The verse says, “*In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, the city of destruction.*” Part of the process of Egypt’s conversion is that one day there will be five cities that shall speak “*..the language of Canaan...*”. This is the language that, although heard in far away Egypt, helped bring them to God. What is this saying to us today? How can we relate? In my observation, the language of Canaan is a language of transportation, conviction and love.

### 1. A Language of Transportation

This language of God’s people in Judah was the language in which God was praised and prayed to. It was the language of God’s Word. Even our English Bible simply preserves what was originally written in their beautiful language of Canaan. This was the language in which God was worshipped!

My wife and I have been to Glencoe, Scotland where the infamous massacre of the Clan McDonald took place. When we were there, we were in a hurry and did not take the time to fully absorb all the details; suffice it to say, it did move us. Recently I came across a story in the midst of the book, The Divine Weaver by Ravi Zacarias. In the book, almost as an aside, Zacharias told about his travel to Glencoe with his Scottish colleague, Stuart McAllister, a native born and bred son of Scotland. As he stood in the pristine beauty of Glencoe in the Scottish Highlands, McAllister began to

narrate the story of the massacre. Zacharias said with the sounds of the bagpipes in the background and the thick Scottish accent of McAllister, in the actual geographical location, it was as though they were carried back three centuries in time. Zacharias was amazed at the reality that seemed experienced. He said it was especially the accent of the Scot that took him back in time to this never-to-be-forgotten experience. What makes a native born and bred Indian feel the sorrow and experience of ancient Scotland? You see, McAllister spoke the language of the place! McAllister transported his Indian friend back.

I sometimes wonder if my oft made references to the Civil War and especially the southern involvement therein gets a little annoying to some of our people. For those who have expressed otherwise, along with a vicarious enjoyment of knowing more of our historical tie to this part of American history, I thank you. Have you wondered, why does our pastor keep taking us there (Civil War) and why must we march all over Virginia with General Robert E. Lee? Allow me to attempt an answer. In the formative years of my life (ages 1 through 9), I was reared in the shadow of Arlington, the home of the Lees. My father explained the war in a rather bias toward the Confederacy. And when he talked of Lee, it was always in the most respectful tone. We moved to Florida in 1960 and in April 1961 Central Florida began to celebrate the Civil War Centennial (the 100th Anniversary of The War Between the States). Polk County was divided between the North and the South, with Auburndale as capitol of the Union and Barlow, capitol of the Confederacy. Re-inactions and commemorative events took place for four years. My father, my brother and I were caught up in all of this. I collected Civil War cards like baseball cards. I could tell you where a battle was fought, who won and always gave some history of Lee, Jackson, or Stuart at the drop of a hat. So between my 10th and 13th years of life, I was immersed in "The War."

There was a moment in this time that I believe took me over the edge in interest of this time in history. It took place in the small town of Barlow, Florida. Daddy was conversing with my brother David and me and said, "Boys, I have read that in Polk County possibly the oldest man in the world lives." It was not documented because he didn't have a birth certificate, but medical exams and his very clear understanding of the details of historical events were beyond deniable explanation. Dad asked David and me, "Boys, he runs a little store in Bartow; do you want to go see him?" We jumped at the chance! I cherish that visit like gold. His name was Charlie Smith. I can see his store now - the rough, old fashioned boards, the old Coke machine where we dragged our soda through a long trough that was triggered loose by a dime and a nickel (Cokes had gone up in price). He sat down in an old wicker chair and he invited us to pull up unmatched chairs with him. We took a swig of Coke and he talked of his youth. He was kidnapped in Africa at the age of 11 and ended up as a slave on a Virginia plantation, not far from Richmond. As he told us of his hardships and good times of his youth, we were enraptured. I recall his unique accent...very Virginian. Then I addressed with hopeful, yet skeptical anticipation this question to Charlie Smith, "Mr. Smith, did you ever see or meet Robert E. Lee?" For as long as I live, I shall not forget what happened next. Mr. Smith's eyes brightened, his near toothless smile swallowed his face and he said, "Oh yes, yessir indeed, and he laughed a high, shrill laugh followed by, "Yessir, yessir, I did."

I must leave off here, but next week I shall continue, with [The Language of Canaan](#). Lord willing, I will begin by telling you how Charlie Smith took us back in time and forever made the Civil War more real to me than much modern history that I have lived through. Then hopefully, we shall draw some spiritual insight.

- Pastor Pope

**[Back to Pastor's Word](#)**