

Verses 2 and 3 describe the dissension and disagreement which will come into the land. Internal strife has always been one of the most destructive forces in the world. Many a nation which has resisted external attack has fallen as a result of internal dissension.

Verse 4 predicts the rise of a fierce dictator in Egypt. It is not stated whether this comes about as a result of foreign conquest or of internal strife. Whether this man is to be an Egyptian or a foreigner, internal strife may well play a vital part in opening the way for his seizure of control. Almost every dictator who has arisen anywhere has secured power as a result of such a condition. Frequently, too, it has been a deciding factor in making possible a nation's fall before a foreign aggressor.

Verses 5 through 10 describe calamities in nature, leading to economic depression. The word "sea" in verse 5 refers to the Nile River. This large stream was often referred to in ancient times as "the sea," and even now the Arabs designate it by the same term. The verse predicts a great decrease in the Nile flow, so that the overflow which fertilizes the land should be cut down or entirely eliminated for a period of years. Such periods have occurred from time to time in the history of Egypt. The result has been famine and depression. All of the events described in the next three verses are such as would naturally come from a decrease in the Nile waters. Such catastrophes would inevitably produce severe economic depression.

Verse 9 shows depression in the great Egyptian textile industry. When trouble comes in one industry of a nation, it is apt to have repercussions in other industries. Industrial and economic trouble in Egypt is the theme of these verses.

Verses 11 to 13 predict confusion in the counsel of the nations's leaders. Judah is looking to Egypt to learn how she can become safe from Assyria. God says that the counsel of Egypt itself is going to be confused. These people are not gods but only men. They do not know what the Lord of Hosts has purposed regarding Egypt. Only God's prophet can reveal the answer to the questions that really are vital for Judah. Verse 14 shows the effect upon the whole nation of the confusion among the leaders. The land staggers like a drunken man.