

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 31

Theme: In spite of Judah wickedly trusting Egypt more than their God, He saved them and revived them.

Outline:

- 1-3 Jerusalem Judged for Trusting in Egypt
- 4-5 God to Mightily Defend Jerusalem
- 6-7 They Should Turn to God Against Idols
- 8-9 God to Mightily Crush the Assyrians

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 7-8,10,18-20,22,36-38; Jeremiah 25,43,46; Ezekiel 29-32.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 7* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-7.pdf>.
- B. *Exposition of Isaiah 8* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-8.pdf>.
- C. *Exposition of Isaiah 10* ... <http://letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-10.pdf>.
- D. *Exposition of Isaiah 18* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-18.pdf>.
- E. *Exposition of Isaiah 19* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-19.pdf>.
- F. *Exposition of Isaiah 20* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-20.pdf>.
- G. *Exposition of Isaiah 22* ... <http://letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-22.pdf>.
- H. *A Threatened Virgin (slides for Sennacherib)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/virgin-daughter-of-zion.pdf>.
- I. *King Hezekiah: Life and Lessons (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/hezekiah-lessons.pdf>.
- J. *Dominion of God (sermons/outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/god/dominion-of-god/sermon.php>.

Introduction:

- A. This chapter and the previous is Assyria's invasion of Judah under Sennacherib and his terrible ruin.
 - 1. Assyria is mentioned by name in both chapters, so we may be certain of the matter (Is 30:31; 31:8).
 - 2. The crime of the Jews is stated in this and the previous chapter – looking to Egypt (Is 30:2-3; 31:1).
 - 3. Even Sennacherib and Rabshakeh knew that Judah was looking to Egypt for help (Is 36:4-6,8-9).
 - 4. Isaiah had already written that the Egyptians and Ethiopians would not save the Jews (Isaiah 20).
 - 5. In some respects quite obvious, chapter 30 is the long version and chapter 31 the short of events.
- B. Any reader that fears God should realize that this event, repeated many times, was important to God.
 - 1. We have already had many chapters relating to it, but the full history is still ahead (Isaiah 36-38).
 - 2. If you are not familiar with Assyria, Sennacherib, Hezekiah, and their timelines, you should be.
 - 3. There are many various lessons to learn that may be gleaned from the chapters pertaining to them.
 - 4. God delivering His people from Egypt, from the Assyrians, and then from Babylon are all featured.
 - 5. Sennacherib invaded during Isaiah's ministry, so he emphasized this enemy and event the most.
 - 6. Jeremiah and Ezekiel came nearly 100 years later, so they emphasized the Babylonian conflict.
- C. Every reader should grasp the main lesson of not looking for help in time of trouble but to God only.
 - 1. These rebels refused to repent and turn to God; instead they chose to look to Egypt to save them.
 - 2. One of the great acts of faith and worship is to trust the invisible God and ignore any visible helps.
 - 3. God expects His children to use means, unless He tells them otherwise, but only after trusting Him.
 - 4. True safety and great peace are by God's protection only (Psalm 4:8; 20:6-8; 33:16-20; 56:4,11; 118:6; 127:1-2; 146:3-6; 147:10-11; Pr 21:31; Eccl 9:11; Dan 3:16-18; Luke 12:4-5; Heb 13:5-6).

1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

- A. Notice the exclamation point for the intense warning of judgment for the terrible crime.
- B. The reason for judgment is clear; the timing is Sennacherib of Assyria (Is 30:31; 31:8).
 - 1. Sennacherib invaded Judah in the 14th year of Hezekiah, king of Judah (Isaiah 36:1).
 - 2. Their nation was still corrupt from Ahaz, and they sought Egypt's help (Is 20:1-6).
- C. These rebels put their confidence in horses, chariots, and horsemen of the Egyptians.
 - 1. **Stay. verb.** To support, sustain, hold up (a person or thing), from the stays of a mast.
 - 2. David knew in time of calamity to look for his support from the LORD (Ps 18:18).
 - 3. God judged the Jews to stay on Him alone (Isaiah 3:1; 10:20; 30:12; 48:2; 50:10).
 - 4. They trusted in the many horses and chariots of Egypt and in the strength of horses.
 - 5. God had warned them in prior generations not to do so (Deut 17:16; Psalm 147:10).
- D. Remember, these rebels had rejected their God, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 30:8-11).
 - 1. In time of trouble you should look to the hills of God for help (Psalm 121:1-8; 123:1).
 - 2. You should seek the LORD by every means (Is 9:13; 64:7; Jer 29:13; Amos 5:4-8).

2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

- A. The inspired disjunctive here, *yet*, opposes their rejection of God for the ability of Egypt.
 - 1. They were wrong to neglect and reject Jehovah in their thoughts of Egypt's abilities.
 - 2. God Himself also is wise (and strength implied from the previous verse) for the war.
 - 3. Egypt is not the only one with wisdom for battle; God also has wisdom they rejected.
 - 4. God is wiser than any. God is stronger than any. Looking elsewhere is a great crime.
 - 5. Stop and think of how offensive it is to look anywhere else for wisdom or strength.
 - 6. The Jews had nearly 1500 years of history from Abraham to Hezekiah of His ability.
- B. Since the Jews rejected God's wisdom and strength, He would judge them for their sin.
 - 1. God would bring evil, not sin, but pain and trouble on the Jews for not trusting Him.
 - 2. His words of judgment, declared here and in previous chapters, would come to pass.
- C. He would arise from His apparent sitting position to wreck fear and havoc on the Jews.
 - 1. His first work would be to punish the evildoers – the Jews – Sennacherib took Judah.
 - 2. His second work would be to punish helpers – Egypt – Sennacherib defeated them.
 - 3. Sennacherib first took all Judah's fenced cities and then defeated Egypt (Is 20:1-6).

3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

- A. Isaiah reminded the rebellious Jews of a fundamental axiom – human helpers are weak.
 - 1. We are not to put our trust in princes, no matter how strong (Is 2:22; Ps 146:3-6).
 - 2. Horses are only brute animals without wisdom or real strength (Ps 33:17; Pr 21:31).
 - 3. The divine Spirit of the living God is infinitely superior to any man or any horse.
 - 4. But before thinking of the Holy Spirit, consider the created spirit of angels to fight.
 - 5. The outcome of this great military conflict would be caused by one angel of death.
 - 6. God’s mighty host of angels and chariots is greatly involved with men (Hab 3:8,15).
 - 7. Think Elisha’s great host (II Kgs 6:16; II Chr 32:7) and chariots of God (Ps 68:17).
 - 8. God has committed His angel to deliver everyone that truly fears Him (Psalm 34:7).
- B. When God chose to intervene in this terrible sin of rejecting Him, it would be very ugly.
 - 1. He would assist the Assyrians in taking all the defended cities of His people of Judah.
 - 2. The Jews were reduced to terrible straits as told elsewhere (Is 7:17-25; 22:1-14; etc.).
 - 3. He would assist the Assyrians to defeat the Egyptians and Ethiopians (Is 20:1-6).
 - 4. Only after both these events would He arise to utterly cast down the Assyrian army.
 - 5. Timeline – Judah ravaged; Philistine cities taken; Tirhakah defeated; 185,000 killed.

***** *God to Mightily Defend Jerusalem – Verses 4-5* *****

4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

- A. This short summary of events switches from God’s judgment to His merciful salvation.
- B. The mighty God of Jacob would come like a lion against the pagan Assyrian invaders.
 - 1. Again, as we often find in scripture, embrace the *as ... so* construction of a simile.
 - 2. What glorious comfort in lions! God would not be afraid of Assyria or bow to them.
 - 3. They had a loud and long voice of boasting, but the pompous talk did not move God.
- C. The LORD of hosts would not desert mount Zion and its hill where Jerusalem was built.
 - 1. The concise summary of events in this chapter leaps from judgment to salvation.
 - 2. When the LORD takes up your cause, there is no reason to fear; shout loudly for joy.

5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

- A. Instead of lions in the previous verse, the simile here is flying birds of prey to the rescue.

1. These are not chickens or ostriches on the ground only sheltering chicks under wing.
 2. These are eagles or other strong birds attacking a threat to a nest with speed and fury.
 3. God as an eagle would save Jerusalem much faster than lions – 150 mph vs. 50 mph.
 4. Those who have wandered too close to a nest with young birds can grasp the simile.
 5. Recall the eagle’s great vision to not lose sight of His own in Jerusalem (Job 39:29).
- B. Sennacherib had boasted that no nation could even move a wing against Him (Is 10:14)!
- C. God’s defense of Jerusalem would not be vain; it would find His purpose – deliverance.
1. This bloodthirsty eagle would pass over Jerusalem in fury to tear the Assyrian host.
 2. There might be here a kind reference to passing over Israel in Egypt (Is 12:13,23,27).

***** *They Should Turn to God Against Idols – Verses 6-7* *****

6 Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

- A. The logical progression of this summary calls for the Jews to repent and turn to God.
1. This summary leaps from woe (Is 31:1-3) to save (Is 31:4-5) to repent (Is 31:6-7).
 2. If the Egyptians had no real power ... and if God would deliver ... then turn to Him!
 3. Note for learning that Jews of Judah and Jerusalem are called the children of Israel.
 4. The Jews had deeply revolted from their God (Is 28:14-22; 29:15; 30:8-11; etc.).
- B. They had deeply revolted from their God as Isaiah had told in many previous chapters.
- C. Or Isaiah appealed to Ephraim (the ten tribes) for their deep revolt to two golden calves.
1. Israel of ten tribes had taken the most rebellious and idolatrous approach of the two.
 2. In addition, they had already been ruined by Shalmaneser before Sennacherib came.

7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

- A. Revival is coming, for you idolatrous Jews will learn your idols cannot stop Assyria.
1. They would be shocked when Sennacherib easily took all the fenced cities of Judah.
 2. They would be shocked with disappointment when Tirhakah went down (Is 20:1-6).
 3. There would be a revival when they saw God deliver them spectacularly Himself.
- B. This revival after Assyria is also the object of these prophecies (Is 10:20-23; 30:18-26).

***** *God to Mightily Crush the Assyrians – Verses 8-9* *****

8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

- A. The singular Assyrian here must be Sennacherib's army cut off by God's death angel.
 - 1. This is not Sennacherib yet, for He was not killed by the death angel; he would flee.
 - 2. The sword that would kill them would not be that of a mighty man of Judah or Egypt.
 - 3. The sword that would kill them would not be that of a mean man of Judah or Egypt.
- B. The Assyrian army would flee from the great fear and havoc of their 185,000 best killed.
 - 1. The soldiers left were not many (Is 10:17-19), but they would flee in obvious terror.
 - 2. The young men, in the best of strength and youth, would be slaughtered in the battle.
 - 3. **Discomfit.** To undo in battle; to defeat or overthrow completely; to beat, to rout.
- C. The sword of the LORD need not be a literal sword, but a metaphorical one of God.

9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

- A. Sennacherib returned with shame of face to his capital city of Nineveh (II Chron 32:21).
- B. But this text tells us there was more than shame – he also feared the invisible enemy.
- C. His princes were afraid of the ensign – flag or standard – of God. Compare to the sword.
- D. God said it; that settles it. His fiery wrath against them came from Zion and Jerusalem.