Pray & Sit Still

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For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose:

therefore have I cried concerning this, **Their strength is to sit still**.

Isaiah 30:7

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

Outline:

1-7 Judah Looked to Egypt for Safety

8-11 Judah Rejected the Word of God

12-17 Judah Judged for Rejecting God

18-26 Judah Saved and Exalted by God

27-33 Assyria Destroyed By God's Fury

Introduction:

A. This chapter and the next one 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 next chapter – looking to Egypt (Isaiah 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 slight more visible helps.
   3. God expects His children to use means, unless He tells them otherwise, but only after trusting Him.
   4. The more difficult the situation or trial in front of you, the more you might have to own this verse.

5. Moses gave a similar statement to Israel with Pharaoh behind and Red Sea before (Ex 14:13-14).
6. Jahaziel a son of Asaph gave a similar statement to Judah to comfort Jehoshaphat (II Chr 20:17).
7. 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).

Judah Looked to Egypt for Safety – *Verses 1-7*

1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

A. The chapter could easily open – *burden of Judah* – because that is exactly what it is.
   1. Whether *woe* or burden, the meaning is the same, God would judge Judah for sins.
   2. They had sinned, and the prophet had a message from heaven for them – judgment.
   3. To grasp God's offence and the Jews' danger, see the exclamation point (Is 30:2).

B. Judah was God's *rebellious children* in the sense of His adoption of them as a nation.
   1. Isaiah had appealed to this relational fact in the opening of this prophecy (Is 1:2,4).
   2. It is simple but powerful logic that *children* ought to reverence fathers (Malachi 1:5).
   3. God hates *rebellion* – calling it witchcraft; we should hate it as well (I Sam 15:23).
   4. They were rebellious, and the prophet reminded them of it (Is 1:2; 30:9; 63:10; 65:2).

C. Judah's sin before Sennacherib's invasion was asking Egypt for help (Is 30:2-3; 31:1).
   1. It added *sin to sin*. God sent the invaders for their idolatry; now they added rebellion.
   2. When you are in trouble, you can ask God for help, or you can ask others for help.
   3. This is very stupid and wrong on many levels, but it offends our mighty God greatly.
   4. They rejected the *covering* of God's Spirit – as protection like the wings of a bird.
   5. The Spirit had *counsel* for them – written precepts, written history, verbal prophets.
   6. Sennacherib and Rabshakeh knew Judah looked to Egypt for help (Is 36:4-6,8-9).

D. Note that Egypt is here called a *covering,* though they should not have sought it of her.
   1. Shadow of wings = protection (Ruth 2:12; Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4).
   2. In this verse Egypt is presented as a *covering*; in the next two she is their *shadow*.
   3. Thus we interpreted Isaiah 18's land to be Egypt as the nation of *shadowing wings*.

E. Sin breeds sin. Once you choose to sin, you will often be forced to sin again to cover.
   1. The Jews were guilty of sin, turning from God, so they needed Egypt for salvation.
   2. Since they had turned from God, they lost their confidence and heard only warnings.
   3. Children learn that once they tell one lie, they will have to tell more to hide the first.
   4. Some will avoid the Lord's Supper (sin of despising Christ) to cover for another sin.
   5. These rebel Jews would not seek the Lord for help, for they were guilty of idolatry.

2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

A. The Jews, we do not know how many of them, took a trip to their hated former enemy.
   1. Looking to Egypt was a common temptation when facing significant foreign armies.
   2. Two chapters already addressed this matter with clear judgment (Isaiah 18 and 20).
   3. Sennacherib knew of the negotiations, for Rabshakeh mocked the plan (Is 36:4-6).
   4. We are not told of Hezekiah's involvement, but it is hard to imagine it without him.
   5. Remember, there was a wicked man in his cabinet that would be removed – Shebna.
   6. They could have dropped to their knees in prayer to ask God for help, but not Jews.
   7. Whether they walked or rode across the Sinai peninsula, they went the wrong way.
   8. Instead of walking 300 miles through a barren wasteland, they could have prayed.

B. Because Egypt had been a major world power, they were thought to be a mighty nation.
   1. Judah was a very small nation compared to Assyria, but Egypt made it more equal.
   2. The Jews did not have the faith of Abram or Jonathan to ignore numerical inferiority.
   3. Strength or numbers are irrelevant to the LORD our God (Psalm 33:16-17; 27:1-3).
   4. He does not even like you counting, so Israel's kings were not to count (Deut 17:16).

C. The shadow of Egypt should refer to the covering of wings by a mother bird (Is 18:1).

3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

A. Isaiah prophesied very specifically with visual demonstration against Egypt (Is 20:1-6).
B. They would be terribly disappointed in the failure of their mighty helper (Isaiah 20:6).
C. There is no way that God can allow a substitute for Him to ever work as men imagine.
D. God will tear down the things you trust until you put your complete faith in Him only.

4 For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

A. The envoy from Judah met with the Egyptians at these two cities of Egypt for assistance.
   1. Zoan is in the Bible seven times; it might be a capital city (Ps 78:12,43; Is 19:11,13).
   2. Isaiah has already condemned this city to be taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Is 19:11,13).
   3. This is the only direct mention of Hanes (yet … Jer 2:16; 43:7; Ezekiel 30:18; etc.).

B. The titles of princes and ambassadors indicate this was a serious pursuit of assistance.

5 They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an

help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

A. Who is ashamed of whom? And when? Here is an obscure verse needing context help.
   1. Were Egyptians ashamed of Jews coming for help? Egypt saw Judah as a reproach?
   2. Or were the Jews ashamed of the Egyptians that did not help them defeat Assyria?
   3. The Jews were ashamed of Egyptians – for context both ways says so (Is 30:3,6-7).
   4. Isaiah told the future, not the history: Egypt is a people that did not profit (Is 30:6).
   5. Here is history: Egypt's princes and ambassadors agreed, but were beat (Is 20:1-6).
   6. The Jews were ashamed of the Egyptians – by the outcome of this prophecy (Is 20:6).
   7. The next chapter, a summary of this chapter, requires *they* be the Jews (Is 31:1-3).
   8. Compare verb tenses of verses 2 (present), 3 (future), 5 (past), 6 (future), for event.
   9. We submit to the fact that prophets like Isaiah may switch verb tenses for one event.

B. Isaiah, prophesying in advance their later shame, condemned them for going to Egypt.
   1. They would be ashamed for the total collapse of their expectation of help (Is 20:6).
   2. They would be reproached for the total loss of funds … and maybe Assyria's wrath.
   3. Sennacherib knew of the negotiations, for Rabshakeh mocked the plan (Is 36:4-6).

6 The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.

A. Those carrying riches and treasures must be the Jews, confirming our sense (Is 30:5).
   1. The subject acting in the previous verse is obscure but sure by surrounding context.
   2. The Egyptians did not carry riches and treasure south of them to Kenya or Tasmania.

B. Here the word *burden* is not used for judgment as in other places, but as a literal *burden*.
   1. We will find this use of *burden* again in Isaiah for hauling Babel's idols (Is 46:1-2).
   2. A related use of *burden*, though different, is the dollar amount required (Hosea 12:1).

C. Beasts – asses and camels – would have the *burden* of carrying the sinful hire to Egypt.
   1. Egypt is directly *south* of Judah, so they are correctly called the *beasts of the south*.
   2. Recall how Daniel described the Ptolemy rulers as kings of the *south* (Dan 11:5-6).
   3. Some riches and treasures of Judah were carried to Egypt to entice them into war.

D. The land of trouble and anguish can be both the Sinai wilderness and the land of Egypt.
   1. Israel had surely suffered in terrible Egypt under oppression (Deut 4:20; Jer 11:4).
   2. Remember how and where Israel spent forty years before Canaan (Deut 1:19; 8:15).
   3. The land of Egypt had lions, vipers, and fiery flying serpents (Deut 8:15; Num 21:6).

E. Egypt would not profit the Jews, regardless of pay, as Isaiah warned (Is 30:5; 20:1-6).
   1. They would take their accumulated profits to a nation that could not profit them.
   2. We ought to always make the greatest investment in the LORD rather than in men.

7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

A. The prophet moved back and forth from judgment to shame to payment back to shame.
   1. Compare verb tenses of verses 2 (present), 3 (future), 5 (past), 6 (future), for event.
   2. We submit to the fact that prophets like Isaiah may switch verb tenses for one event.

B. Sennacherib would make quick work of the Egyptians and Ethiopians (Isaiah 20:1-6).
   1. Tirhakah entered the region, and Assyria moved from Lachish to Libnah (Is 37:8-9).
   2. But before God killed the 185,000 Assyrians, Egypt/Ethiopia was defeated (Is 20:6).

C. Therefore God inspired Isaiah to mock the rebellious effort, *Their strength is to sit still.*
   1. Whose strength? Who sits? Why? A quick glance mocks Egypt's strength for war.
   2. But the warning of woe is against Judah and Jerusalem for asking Egypt for help.
   3. Isaiah is not speaking to Egypt. The third-person party addressed here is the Jews.

D. God cried about this by Isaiah to the Jews in the third person. Compare first two verses.
   1. The previous pronouns, *they* and *their,* are Jews, by considering context (Is 30:5-6).
   2. Instead of walking down to Egypt with heavy loads, they could stay home (Is 30:2,6).
   3. Instead of walking to Egypt with heavy loads, they should return and rest in God.
   4. The context says it – *return, rest, quiet, confidence* – for saving strength (Is 30:15).
   5. What can you do while sitting at home? Ask God instead of paying Egypt (Is 30:2).
   6. Therefore, this cry to Judah is that the best thing is to sit still for their mighty God.
   7. God would destroy the Assyrians Himself, which He next detailed (Is 30:19-33).
   8. God would destroy Sennacherib Himself, which He had told (Is 10:12,16,19,24-34).
   9. Did God ever say stand still and see before? Yes! About Egypt (Exodus 14:13-14)!
   10. God had offered them rest and refreshing before, but they would not hear (Is 28:12).
   11. The lesson is important – we should hope and quietly wait for the LORD (Lam 3:26).
   12. Do your reasonable best, and trust the Lord for the rest, and go to bed (Ps 127:1-2).
   13. Stand still by Moses, for Jehoshaphat! Sit still for Judah! Go to sleep by Solomon!

Judah Rejected the Word of God – Verses 8-11

8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may ***be for the time to come for ever and ever:***

A. God's judgment of trust in Egypt had been well summarized. Now it should be written.
   1. God had declared the woe on Judah to Isaiah and had finished it with clear advice.
   2. He wanted it written for future reference to His forewarning (Deut 31:19; Hab 2:2).
   3. This would provide the public evidence they were a rebellious people (Is 30:9-11).

B. He was to publicly write it *before them*, as he had done before (Is 8:1-4; Jer 36:1-4).

C. God's warnings are written down so that future generations can know the will of God.
   1. We rightly use this passage of scripture for inspiration and preservation of the Bible.
   2. He was to publicly write it in a table – for public availability to read (Habakkuk 2:2).
   3. He was also to note it in a book for time to come (Is 40:8; Ro 15:4; II Tim 3:16-17).

9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:

A. Rather than these being the only words written, they include reaction to what he wrote.
   1. Only writing that the Jews were rebellious liars would not carry much future weight.
   2. Writing that God had warned not to trust Egypt and He would save is much heavier.

B. The Jews were rebellious, as He had started this prophecy – rebellious children (Is 30:1).
   1. Rebellion is refusing to do what you are told to do by an authority – in this case God.
   2. The Jews were very stiff-necked and rebellious (Deut 31:27-29; Zep 3:2; Acts 7:51).
   3. God hates *rebellion* – calling it witchcraft; we should hate it as well (I Sam 15:23).

C. How were they liars? Professing to be God's covenant people but rejecting His words.
   1. Therefore, we want to be careful with our promises like in baptism (Eccl 5:1-6).
   2. They had a form of hypocritical religion that is lying (Is 29:13-14; Ezek 33:30-33).

D. This is harsh language, but it is how God had His preacher address the O.T. church.
   1. For further examples of such harshness.
   2. For examples of intense persuasion.

10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

A. These rebellious liars against the covenant of God told their prophets to not prophesy.
   1. **Seer**. One to whom divine revelation are made in visions. A prophet (I Samuel 9:9).
   2. **See**. To seek or obtain a revelation from God and/or to communicate it to others.

3. These rebels told their pastors and teachers to not teach them right things any longer.
4. They wanted pleasant and peaceful homilies rather than thundering against their sins.
5. They did not care if what they heard was false – a good lie was better than bad truth.
6. The Jews greatly preferred preaching of peace than preaching of judgment (Jer 6:14).
7. Read the perverted view of Ahab to hear good lies rather than bad truth (I Kgs 22:8).
8. A Lying Spirit from God (slides).

B. This is exactly what has occurred today in full agreement with Paul's inspired warning.
1. The most important prophecy for our time is this one by Paul (II Timothy 3:1 – 4:4).
2. Men will not listen to truth any longer, because they will not endure sound doctrine.
3. They want to hear fables – religious entertainment to scratch their lust-itching ears.
4. There will always be a heap of preachers to pander to such an audience (Jer 5:31).
5. If a preacher offends enough, they will threaten to kill him (Jer 11:21; 26:11,20-23).
6. For more about perilous times (slides).
7. Perilous times (details).
8. Contemporary Christianity (details).

C. Do not be like them! God's preachers never wanted the job, and God chose the message.
1. Paul's warning is simple, *Despise not prophesying* (I Thess 5:20). Love preaching!
2. Choose instead the fabulous attitude of all the hearers in Ezra's time (Neh 8:1-12).
3. A Preaching Service.

11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

A. The rebellious, profane Jews pushed their prophets to stop pressing them with warnings.
1. *The way* is God's doctrine and practice – they told their preachers to get a new theme.
2. *The path* is God's doctrine and practice – they told prophets to modify the message.
3. *The Holy One of Israel* is Jehovah – they told their preachers to stop invoking Him.

B. This is hard to believe given the credibility and reliability of God's dealing with Israel.
1. The Creator God had chosen Israel to be His people and blessed them (Amos 3:2).
2. He had revealed Himself to Abraham and Moses and the nation in spectacular ways.
3. Their entire national history was filled with marvelous miracles and favors for them.
4. All they had to do was check with their cousins in Ephraim to see God's judgment.

C. But consider American Christians today compromising as fast as Israel did back then.
1. No people have ever had such an abundance of all things and freedom for the truth.
2. Yet most Christians and churches have compromised with the world against God.
3. They love pleasures more than God; they only have a form of godliness, not reality.

4. They have turned their ears voluntarily from the truth and toward effeminate fables.
5. Strong Bible preaching today is rejected and ridiculed as legalism and nitpicking.
6. Warning about judgment is rejected as old-fashioned fire and brimstone preaching.
7. Universalism is the fastest growing ism as men deny the Holy One's plan for sinners.

D. The proper preaching of God's word quickly finds false brethren of Jews and Gentiles.
1. Real preaching must be endured, as Ezra's Judah did, but not today (II Tim 4:3-4).
2. It must be endured for its proper harshness to demand changed lives (II Cor 10:4-6).
3. It must be endured for lack of entertaining fables for carnal Christians or reprobates.
4. It must be endured for length to convey adequate material (Neh 8:1-12; Ac 20:7-11).

E. Check the linked material above in the previous verses of this section for more meaning.

Judah Judged for Rejecting God – Verses 12-17

12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

A. *Wherefore* draws a conclusion by their two sins – paying Egypt and rejecting preaching.
1. He invoked the *Holy One of Israel* in direct violation of their evil desire (Is 30:11).
2. Ministers should never compromise or modify the message for rebellious sinners.
3. They can be made all things to all men only in issues of liberty for potential converts.

B. *This word* here must be His warning of impending judgment and the offers of salvation.
1. Warnings of impending judgment have been made from the first verses (Is 30:1-7).
2. Offers of salvation have also been made to these Jews from the first verses (Is 30:15).
3. The emphasis in this and the next chapter are a strong warning against trusting Egypt.
4. They not only disobeyed the word (fools), but they also despised the word (scorners).

C. Instead of hearing God's warning and taking His offers, they stayed in their vain course.
1. They oppressed each other; they were perverse against God; they continued in both.
2. They trusted in oppression of the poor, a frequent sin of these rebels (Is 1:17; 58:6).
3. They were perverse in the covenant with death and payment to Egypt (Is 28:14-22).
4. They stubbornly stayed in their plan – God calls stubbornness idolatry (I Sam 15:23).

13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

A. *Therefore* draws an even stronger conclusion from the previous verse about rebellion.

B. Iniquity does have a plural (55 times in the Bible), but it is usually collective (Is 53:6).

C. The sins intended here are those that have been listed in preceding verses and chapters.
1. The main sin at hand is twofold – payment to Egypt for help and rejecting preaching.

2. Keep the focus on Egypt, for the chapter began with it, and he repeats it (Is 31:1-3).

D. Their trust in Egypt is faulty on two counts – the might of Assyria and offence to God.
   1. God compares their trust in Egypt to a high wall with a bad rupture swelling outward.
   2. **Breach**. The product of breaking. A physically broken or ruptured condition of anything; a broken, fractured, damaged, or injured sport, place, or part.
   3. A ruptured wall swelling outward under the weight above can explode in an instant.
   4. David used the same description for the utter ruin of his enemies by God (Ps 62:3).
   5. Their confidence and success trusting in Egypt would likewise explode in an instant.
   6. Compare words – *suddenly at an instant* – with *their strangers* failing (Isaiah 29:5).
   7. The obscure text was explained by context and facts, but it also has the same words.

E. Isaiah is quite clear about the tragic results when Judah heard of Egypt's fall (Is 20:6).

14 And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.

A. The thing to be broken in this context is the association with Egypt for national safety.

B. God would use Sennacherib to crush the Egyptian-Ethiopian helpers (Is 20:1-6; 29:5).

C. God and Assyria would fully break the Egypt-Judah military combine and confidence.
   1. Neither God nor Sennacherib would be of mind to spare – they would fully crush it.
   2. He would break it like a potters' vessel that is completely shattered into small pieces.
   3. There would not be potsherds or shards big enough to do anything all – total ruin.
   4. Compare the terms in the previous chapter of it breaking into dust or chaff (Is 29:5).
   5. Keep the simile in mind or you will be tempted to make too much of the details here.

15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

A. Here again, Adonai Jehovah, identifies Himself as the Holy One of Israel against them.

B. This one-verse interruption of warning about judgment restates the offer of deliverance.
   1. Your salvation is by returning to rest – come back to me; sit still to watch (Is 30:7).
   2. You can quietly sit still and in confidence await the outcome of Assyria vs. Jehovah.
   3. If you show your trust in Me, I will save you mightily for your show of faith to Me.
   4. Hezekiah eventually did this, and God delivered him and Judah most miraculously.

C. The prophets warned and offered incessantly, but the Jews would not obey (Jer 6:16).

D. Reader, take this verse and apply it to your life – quietly sit, take rest, confidently trust.
    1. Do not think your strength is in something on earth, like these Jews did with Egypt.
    2. Be quietly confident in the LORD by turning all to Him for His peace (Phil 4:6-7).

16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

A. The Jewish segment God blasted here even had backup plans if their Egypt plan failed.
    1. They likely acquired horses from Egypt, who were known for them (Is 31:1; 36:9).
    2. But the horse's strength is vanity unless God blesses (Ps 20:7; 33:16-17; Pr 21:31).
B. They would not be safe in Judah; if they tried to flee, they would be caught by chasers.
C. You can make plans all you want, but only one will work – repentance and obedience.

17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

A. This verse had been promised 800 years earlier or so by Moses, if they were to disobey.
    1. For one to chase a thousand of God's people means God rejected them (Deut 32:30).
    2. Sennacherib or Rabshakeh was one, or the envoy five, the general warning is best.
B. All that would be left – tiny shards – would be very few out of the original host of Judah.
    1. Beacon is a sign, an ensign, or a signal – a small light – on top of a large mountain.
    2. Ensign is a flag or standard or a signal – a small pennant – on top of a large hill.
    3. In comparison to any army, the beacon, ensign, or standard to gather it is miniscule.

Judah Saved and Exalted by God – Verses 18-26

18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

A. Isaiah then declared the promise of God that He would deliver them … after punishment.
    1. The LORD would wait – He would let the Assyrians hurt them – before His rescue.
    2. Their God would exalt Himself against His detractors by their ruin – before a rescue.
    3. The LORD would expose the folly of trusting Egypt and then kill 185,000 Himself.
B. God is a God of righteous justice. In this case, judgment is pain for their many vile sins.
C. Those that wait on God – trust Him and sit still to watch Him work – would be saved.
D. Love Paul's version, where needed condemnation is corrected by grace (Rom 5:20-21).

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

A. God committed Himself to save Zion at Jerusalem against Assyria's blasphemous blast.
   1. Remember His glorious words to Hezekiah on behalf of His virgin daughter of Zion.
   2. When Judah in painful terror cried humbly and repentantly for help, God saved them.

B. Compare the previous verse; God did not intervene until He heard their weeping cry.

C. They did not weep and beg for help until their objects of trust were destroyed (Is 20:6).

20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

A. He would wait to let the terrible happen – Sennacherib take Judah – but then save them.

B. The bread of adversity and water of affliction is a siege – prison fare for Zion (De 16:3).

C. God would restore teachers to Jerusalem like before (Is 10:20-21; 28:5-6; 29:17-21).
   1. They would not be in hiding and out of public view due to hatred and persecution.
   2. They would be endorsed by the government and populace due to revival in religion.
   3. The general sentiment of the nation would change, allowing prophets in public view.

21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

A. This is a wonderful condition for the church – which they had lost – plentiful preachers.
   1. Constant, practical preaching will accomplish this blessing for those who will listen.
   2. Preachers usually are leading out front and thus are slow to observe bad wandering.
   3. They do reprove and correct along with doctrine and instruction (II Tim 3:16-17).

B. God also leads by His Spirit and His word, which we pray for, but usually by preachers.
   1. God gave His candle to men in their consciences, and He convicts by His Holy Spirit.
   2. When they rebel sufficiently, as Judah did, the Spirit becomes their enemy (Is 63:10).

C. These verses here describe the revival God would produce after Assyria (Is 10:20-23).

22 Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

A. Judah's revival would also include a hatred of idolatry and throwing away pagan items.
   1. A revival surely involves turning to God, but it also involves turning away from sin.

2. It is a shame that true repentance is hardly taught anymore, but it is crucial for faith.
3. The apostles preached repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus (Acts 20:21).

B. True fear of God hates evil (Pr 8:13; Ps 119:128)! These Jews would defile their idols.
1. They would throw away their former religious icons as if bloody menstrual rags.
2. They would shout at them with angry vengeance to get away from them. Hallelujah!
3. This is how we ought to abominate any compromise, heresy, or paganism we meet.

23 Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

A. Do not be troubled by another genitive phrase – rain of thy seed is objective-genitive.
1. These actions are not in order – they would sow their ground; God would give rain.
2. For more about genitive phrases (slides).

B. When Judah would cry unto the Lord with repentance and faith, He would bless them.
1. The Bible often tells of God judging financially for sins (Hag 1:5-11; Mal 3:7-12).
2. This does not mean financial success is approval – not at all (Pr 1:32; Lu 16:19-31).

C. The terms here describe fabulous agricultural prosperity for all efforts in the whole land.
1. This prosperity was fulfilled in the 15 years of Hezekiah (Is 29:17; II Chr 32:27-29).
2. There were likely sabbatical years miraculously overcome for Judah (Is 37:30-32).
3. Consider how the psalmist described the Jews returning from Babylon (Ps 126:1-6).

D. A church may find such prosperity by praying against strange children (Ps 144:11-15).

24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

A. These are the plow animals – for Old English ear means to till or cultivate the ground.

B. The prosperity would be so great that even their animals would eat the best grain fare.
1. These animals would not be limited to grass or hay and their nutrient deficiencies.
2. They would not have to forage for their own food in pastures but be grain fed.
3. They would get clean grain that had been winnowed and kept clean in a granary.
4. When you see grain-fed beef on a menu, think about this description of prosperity.
5. Meat of a stalled ox or fatted calf with grain to eat is far better than those that forage.

C. You have no idea how much God can prosper a man that gives heart and life to God.

25 And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, ***rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.***

A. God's reward for their repentance and revival, which He brought about, would be great.
B. The acts of God would be on every side, but they would all be positive for obedience.
C. The great slaughter and falling towers here are collapse and retreat of Assyria's army.
    1. This is absolutely Sennacherib's defeat in the reign of Hezekiah (Is 30:31; 31:8).
    2. God smote 185,000 of his best men and leaders dead by an angel (II Chron 32:21).
    3. What towers? They could be metaphorical for the towering leaders of the Assyrians.
    4. They were likely the siege towers planned for Jerusalem but destroyed in the retreat.
    5. The slaughter of 185,000 is described variously (Is 10:33-34; 29:7-8; 37:36-38; etc.).

26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

A. Here are similitudes of great prosperity and peace when God saved Hezekiah and Judah.
    1. Bright light is a metaphor for good times of various kinds (Is 24:23; 58:8; 60:19-20).
    2. The light of the moon is increased to the sun's light; the sun's light increased 7-fold.
B. This occurred when God bound up the breach of His people and ended their judgment.
    1. There were three great judgments of His people – Assyria, Babylon, and the Romans.
    2. This is the first by the first major prophet – God punished Judah by Sennacherib.
    3. He brought about a revival through Hezekiah after the signal victory (Isa 10:20-23).
    4. The revival and the light coming from God are described elsewhere (Is 58:1-14).
C. Some conveniently and coolly transfer the verse with or without its context it to Christ.
    1. The context all around this passage is going to Egypt for help, which was not Christ.
    2. This revival includes the violent rejection of idolatry, which did not occur by Jesus.
    3. Jesus judged the Jewish state and left it desolate throughout the period of Gentiles.
    4. God did not bind up the breach and heal the wound of the Jews under His Messiah.
    5. There was no prosperity for Jews anything like this in the centuries following Jesus.

Assyria Destroyed by God's Fury – Verses 27-33

27 Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger,

and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his ***tongue as a devouring fire:***

A. The LORD God came from heaven in the form of His angel to destroy Sennacherib.
    1. The name of the LORD is put for the LORD in the Bible (Pr 18:10; Is 59:19; etc.).
    2. This last section by its content and its context is the overthrow of the Assyrian army.
    3. He would not need an army to do His work like with Nebuchadnezzar much later.
    4. He would be the ruling king executing His furious will by His own angel of death.
B. This glorious language is comparable to David describing God helping him (Psalm 18).
C. This glorious language is comparable to Nahum describing ruin of Nineveh (Nahum 1).
D. Considering the whole chapter, this closing speech would give the faithful great hope.
    1. Could you sit still and wait on God, if you knew Jehovah was coming in this fashion?
    2. What great comfort we also have by promise of Jesus' appearing (II Thess 1:7-10).

28 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

A. Reference to plural nations is no problem here – every empire is composed of nations.
B. The death of Sennacherib's army did not kill him, though his sons killed him later.
    1. Recall, this very language was used for Assyrians almost taking Jerusalem (Is 8:8).
    2. The best of his army were killed in one night, but he was not killed for 30 years.
C. The nations' conscripts composing this army would be reduced to vanity – to nothing.
D. God had ruling control of this army like a bridle on a horse – to fail in their expedition.

29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

A. How would Jerusalem and Judah respond to such a glorious victory by God Himself?
    1. They would be in a celebratory spirit as described, which we must fervently imagine.
    2. Compare the celebration of Israel after the Egyptian army drowned (Ex 15:1-21).
B. This description adds an appropriate name for God – the mighty, not holy, One of Israel.

30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

A. This fabulous language describes the death angel of Jehovah visiting the Assyrian camp.

1. There is no need to find specific meaning in each phrase here like many other places.
2. We have no record these phrases were fulfilled literally, but they were figuratively.
3. From creation by His voice to resurrection by Christ's shout and voice of the archangel, God executes His will by His mighty voice, like thunder (Psalm 29:1-11).
4. God's voice will be applied to the destruction of the Assyrian army in the next verse.

B. The lighting down of His arm is the blow or fall of His arm to ruin the Assyrians [OED].

C. Compare these terms and others like them elsewhere (Psalm 18; Nahum 1; Lam 2:1-9).

31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

A. Here it is the voice of Jehovah that killed the 185,000, though we know it was an angel.

B. Jacob wrestled with God … an angel … a man … at once (Gen 32:24,30; Hosea 12:3-4).

C. Even when the Assyrian smote with a rod, he and his rod were God's rod (Is 10:5,15).

D. But now it was God's turn to use His own rod and beat down the Assyrian army to dust.

32 And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.

A. Sennacherib was God's rod/staff against Judah and other cities – Ashdod, Lachish, etc.
1. The previous verse described his role, and Isaiah had earlier explained it (Is 10:5,15).
2. God stated the things Sennacherib had done was by Him and for Him (Is 37:26-27).

B. The grounded staff was God's purpose to use Sennacherib against a variety of nations.
1. Grounded. Deeply or strongly founded; firmly fixed or established; by a good basis.
2. God chose Sennacherib and enabled him to be a punishing staff in a variety of places.
3. The LORD laid these assignments on Sennacherib to pass to certain places for battle.
4. Which refers back to every place he visited, not to the determined staff in his hand.

C. All the places where Sennacherib had waged war would rejoice for God crushing him.
1. Every place where God sent this staff of His counsel, the people would celebrate.
2. None could resist him as he knew and we can read, but God sent him home fearful.
3. Tabrets and harps are musical instruments for celebrating the ruin of the Assyrians.

D. The plural battles here were by Sennacherib shaking his rod against the cities given him.
1. We know from the immediate context that Sennacherib had a rod by which he smote.
2. We know God used Him as a rod and it was actually God shaking the king (Is 10:15).

E. This verse is insertion of narrative for God's use of him and cities celebrating his ruin.

F. An alternative explanation or exposition for the verse is God beating Sennacherib down.

1. We look back to the previous verse and make beaten down there a staff by His voice.
2. Every place must become the death of the 185k, his assassination by his sons, etc.
3. Plural battles must also be these events; we do not know other events against him.
4. Wherever God brings His grounded staff to beat Sennacherib, the citizens celebrate.
5. In this case, the LORD laying on him will be stripes by the staff, not various places.
6. The shaking in battles is therefore God shaking His grounded staff against the king.

33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

A. Tophet was a place outside Jerusalem for perpetual burning, once used in child sacrifice.
   1. God ordained to burn the king of Assyria in wrath by killing his army and then him.
   2. There is much fire language in this chapter and the next, which thoroughly destroys.
   3. Do not let futurists try to take this text and apply it so some battle at Armageddon.

B. These are similitudes of the destruction of Sennacherib's mighty army by God Himself.

C. Embrace the dramatic and graphic language describing our God's hatred of our enemies.