

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part XLV: God's Judgment On Judah's Effort To Handle Insecurity Apart From God (Isaiah 30:1-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Human beings down through history have struggled with insecurity in the face of difficult, threatening foes.
- B. Some in Judah in Isaiah's era feared an invasion from Assyria, so they sought an alliance with Egypt, a nation that was then a waning power and utterly useless for defending Judah, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1079.
- C. Isaiah 30:1-18 addresses this errant effort to handle insecurity, with a timeless message for us today:

II. God's Judgment On Judah's Effort To Handle Insecurity Apart From God, Isaiah 30:1-18.

- A. Isaiah's pronouncement of "woe" in Isaiah 30:1 is directed toward a party in Judah that chose to try to make an alliance with Egypt not only apart from God and God's directive, but in violation of Scripture, Isaiah 30:1-2:
 - 1. Scripture at Deuteronomy 17:16 and 20:1 forbade the people of Judah from returning to Egypt to obtain horses for national defense since God's people were to rely on the Lord for victory in war.
 - 2. Nevertheless, Judah's pro-Egypt party chose to carry out plans of their own versus those of the Lord, they intended to form an alliance with Egypt apart from the leading of God's Spirit and to go down into Egypt without consulting the Lord in looking to Egypt for military protection, Isaiah 30:1-2.
- B. God then predicted through Isaiah that Pharaoh's protection, his shade from the destructive threat of Assyrian invasion, would be so futile that Judah's alliance with Egypt would bring them shame, Isaiah 30:3. The Egyptian officials in Zoan and Hanes were not capable of helping Judah as Egypt was a crumbling empire and helpless before the Assyrian onslaught, so Judah's alliance effort would only bring her shame, Isa. 30:4-5.
- C. Having predicted the futility and shame of this self-help effort to handle their insecurity, Isaiah 30:6-7 presents an oracle about the wretched journey of Judah's envoys to form an alliance with Egypt:
 - 1. The journey passed through the wilderness where dangerous lions, lionesses, adders and darting snakes threatened the envoy that carried riches on their donkeys and camels to Egypt, an unprofitable nation that was unable to help, Isaiah 30:6-7a NIV. Thus, God called Egypt figuratively "Rahab who sits still" (ESV) or "Rahab the Do-Nothing" (NIV), Isa. 30:7b. In Ugaritic literature, Rahab was a female sea monster, and, possibly like a hippopotamus that often sat in the "Nile doing nothing," Ibid., p. 1080. The picture of an envoy risking its welfare in the wilderness journey to give riches to form a treaty with a hapless, crumbling Egypt shows the futility of relying on human effort to handle insecurity.
- D. The real cause behind this tragic scene was rebellion and deceit on the part of the pro-Egypt party. It refused to heed the Lord's instruction through His prophet, so God directed Isaiah to record this sin in a scroll as an everlasting witness against them, Isa. 30:8-9. [This may be one of the books in the last judgment, Rev. 20:12.]
- E. Indeed, they chose to hear what they wanted to hear, as if telling the seers to stop seeing any more visions of God (Isa. 30:10a) and the prophets to cease giving them visions of what is right (Isa. 30:10b) as they wanted to hear pleasant things even if they were false, Isa. 30:10c. (E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. II, p. 345)
- F. The pro-Egypt people had thus told God's prophets to leave their way in life, to get off of their path in life and to stop confronting them with the Holy One of Israel, the Lord Himself, Isaiah 30:11!
- G. However, regardless of their rejection of the message of Him, the Holy One of Israel warned that since the pro-Egypt party relied on oppression and deceit, that sin would backfire: it would become to them like a high wall that is cracked and bulging and suddenly collapses, breaking into pieces like pottery shards so small that not a fragment could be used for taking coals from a hearth or for scooping water from a cistern, Isa. 30:12-14.
- H. God had wanted Judah to rely on Him in repentance, faith and rest, but she had refused, Isa. 30:15. Instead, she said she would flee from invading Assyrians on swift horses (Isaiah 30:16a), so God predicted she would indeed flee before swift pursuers, fleeing in great terror until little was left of them, Isaiah 30:16b-17.
- I. Conversely, the Lord wanted to be gracious to Judah, to show her compassion, for He was a God of justice Who blessed all who waited in faith for Him versus trying to handle their insecurities their way, Isa. 30:18.

Lesson: For trying to handle their fear of invading Assyria not by trusting the Lord or heeding His Word, but by rebelliously choosing their own view of reality and making an alliance with a crumbling Egypt, the pro-Egypt party would be haplessly shamed for their errant alliance and terrorized by the very Assyrian invaders they had dreaded.

Application: May we handle insecurity by trusting in God so as to rest versus tragically relying on human effort.