

Isaiah Chapter 30

Verses 1-7: The “rebellious children” are the people of Judah who are determined to “go down into Egypt,” that is, to seek an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. “Hanes” is mentioned in the bible only here. It was apparently near Zoan (Tanis), the largest Egyptian city near the Israelite border. It served as the capital of the Twenty first and Twenty second Dynasties of Egypt.

Isaiah 30:1 "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:"

“Not of me ... not of my spirit”: Hezekiah’s advisers urged him to turn to the Egyptians, not to God, for help against the invading Assyrians. Isaiah denounced this reliance of Egypt rather than God, who had forbidden such alliances.

The children (in verse 1), are those belonging to God. In the physical sense, this is speaking of the descendants of Jacob (Israel). We can see from this, God does not want them seeking counsel from other people. God wants them to seek His counsel.

They are looking for another country (Egypt), to protect them, or be their covering. This is a sin, and is just adding this sin to those they have already committed. They should seek forgiveness from God and take counsel of Him. In their behalf, we must remember the way to the Father was closed to them at this time.

The way for the Christians to the Father was opened, when the temple veil was torn from the top to the bottom, when Jesus was crucified. In the spiritual sense, here, we can see that God does not want His sons (Christians), to take counsel of the world (Egypt), either.

The Holy Spirit of God is the teacher and guide for the Christian. We are protected by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 30:2 "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!"

“Have not asked at my mouth”: They had failed to consult God’s prophet.

“Egypt ... Pharaoh ... Egypt”: The Lord had warned Israel against returning to Egypt (Deut. 17:16). Now He warns them against an alliance with Egypt (31:1). Note the similar advice for the Assyrian Rabshakeh, while laying siege to Jerusalem (36:9).

The worst thing of all is where they are going for help. Egypt is a symbol of the world and worldliness. This would be the blind leading the blind. The only help believers have is in the LORD. We cannot, and should not, look to the world for answers. They will lead us astray with them.

Pharaoh is just a man. God had shown the inability of the Pharaoh against God in the 10 plagues he brought on Egypt. This Pharaoh is not a specific person, but symbolizes whoever is ruling in Egypt. The Egyptians cannot even take care of themselves, or Egypt how could they help God's people?

God is a jealous God. He will be angry at them for looking for help other than from Him.

Isaiah 30:3 "Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt [your] confusion."

Shame ... humiliation. The Assyrians had already defeated the Egyptian army only 100 miles from the Egyptian border.

God had His children's needs first in His mind. The leader of Egypt (probably Tirhakah), had Egypt's interest at heart. They were looking at Pharaoh as if he were god. He is not.

Throwing in with Egypt is like bringing the world into the church. Neither will survive for very long. They are based on worldliness.

Isaiah 30:4 "For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes."

"Zoan ... Hanes": Judah's emissaries had penetrated from Zoan in the Northeast of Egypt to Hanes fifty miles south of Memphis.

It seems Zoan was at one time a prominent city of Egypt. It, like many other cities of that day, did not survive. The ambassadors are those representing the leader of Egypt. It seems there was a meeting place to discuss all of this.

Isaiah 30:5 "They were all ashamed of a people [that] could not profit them, nor be a help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach."

These descendants of Jacob should be ashamed, but whether this means them, I cannot tell. Egypt thought of Jacob's descendants as being of no help to them. They were a reproach to heathen countries, because of their God.

Isaiah 30:6 "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]."

Isaiah pictured a rich caravan, trudging slowly through rugged territory fraught with dangers, on its way to Egypt to purchase assistance.

It appears from this that, they were carrying their treasures to give to Egypt in exchange for Egypt protecting them. The place they were to meet and make the deal was thought to be full of evil, such as the lion, flying serpent, and the viper.

Isaiah 30:7 "For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength [is] to sit still."

Egypt was unwilling to help so the prophet calls the powerful Egypt “Rahab”, meaning “strength”, or “sitting idle” (Hebrew). “Rahab” is used of Egypt (in Psalms 87:4; 89:10).

After all of their plans, Egypt is no help to them at all. It appears from this that, Egypt sits by idly and allows them to be overrun. Even if they did help some, it was to no avail.

Verses 8-17: The prophet is commanded by God to write His message in a “table” (tablet), and a “book” (sepher). He is to write down God’s message “for the time to come” (or for succeeding generations to read). He is to note that the people of Judah are a “rebellious people,” Who are telling the prophets “See not ... Prophecy not.”

They have refused the truth and would rather hear prophets to “cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us”. While the nation was busy sending out emissaries of peace they had failed to make peace with God. “Returning” and “rest” refer to repentance and faith, which are necessary to true salvation.

Isaiah 30:8 "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:"

The Lord’s instruction to Isaiah was to make a permanent written record so that future generations could learn Israel’s folly of trusting in Egypt instead of in the Lord.

This is not to be forgotten. They are to write it down and remember their folly of getting help from Egypt.

Isaiah 30:9 "That this [is] a rebellious people, lying children, children [that] will not hear the law of the LORD:"

“Rebellious people ... Lying children”: The people’s unwillingness to obey the Lord necessitated the keeping of a permanent record of their misdeeds.

These children of God have rebelled against God, when they sought help from Egypt. They claim to be children of God, but they do not obey Him. They are not even interested in the law of the LORD given to them to live by.

All of their troubles would be over, if they would repent and turn to God. God is their very present help. They should not look to the world for answers.

Verses 10-11: Isaiah’s listeners were tired of hearing counsel that was contrary to the path they desired to follow and wanted him to change his message to accommodate them.

Isaiah 30:10 "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:"

These Israelites did not want to hear the truth from the prophets. They wanted to hear things that pleased them, not the truth. That is so much like what people in the church say today. They want to hear that God loves them, but they do not want to hear anything they have to do. They do not want their sins pointed out, so that they can repent and be saved.

They wanted even the prophets to prophesy only things they wanted to hear.

Isaiah 30:11 "Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."

Holy One of Israel was a name of God that Isaiah frequently used. Perhaps he used it so much to compare God's holiness with the people's unholiness. They felt so guilty when Isaiah kept reminding them of their failures. They went so far as to say, they did not want God before them anymore.

Verses 12-14: Since the people opted not to hear the word of the Lord's prophet, they will hear from the Lord's judgment.

Isaiah 30:12 "Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:"

It is obvious they are not interested in the Word of God. They do not want to be led by the Spirit of God, and they do not have respect for His law. Since they have put their trust in the things of this world, such as brute strength and evil, God will not help them.

He gave them a free will, and they have chosen oppression and perverseness over Godly things. They can stay in their evil.

Isaiah 30:13 "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."

They have pulled away from God. There is a break (breach), in their relationship with God. Their sin has separated them from God. Their punishment for their sin will come suddenly upon them.

They have built a wall separating themselves from God. The wall will crumble and fall. Their handiwork will fail.

Isaiah 30:14 "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."

Judah's fall is compared here, to the shattering of a fallen pitcher. There will not be anything left of it. There will not even be enough left to get water with, or to pick a piece of fire up with. It is totally shattered.

Isaiah 30:15 "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."

The Israelite rebels refused the true avenue of salvation and strength, i.e. resting and confidence in the Lord.

If the Israelites had just come home and quietly waited upon the Lord in rest and peace, He would have fought for them. They would have been safe. They would not listen to God, and they did not trust His promises. Abraham's faith saved him, not something he did. Placing their complete trust in God would have saved the Israelites.

Psalms 29:11 "The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace."

2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Isaiah 30:16 "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."

"Horses ... swift": The people put their trust in Egypt's horses instead of the Lord. No horse could deliver them from their God-appointed oppressors (Deuteronomy. 17:16; Psalms 33:17; 147:10).

They are not interested in the help of God. They are depending upon their own strength and the strength of the Egyptians in battle. They are feeling as if these swift horses are all they need. God says, since you depend on that, we will see that your enemy's horses are swift, as well.

Isaiah 30:17 "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 a hill."

"One thousand ... one": Similar figures elsewhere describe Israel's victories (Lev. 26:36; Joshua 23:10), and defeats (Deut. 32:30).

We see they will be so frightened that just a handful (5), of the enemy will cause them to run and hide. They will be stripped of all their equipment, and will stand helpless in front of the enemy. They will be like a flag that symbolizes their defeat.

Verses 18-33: Because God is “gracious” and has been willing to “wait” for His people to return to Him, He will certainly bless those who “wait for him.” “Waiting” is a confident and dependent trust in God.

The reference to the “bread of adversity and the water of affliction” shows that God teaches us lessons through circumstance when we will not listen to our “teachers” who call us to walk in “the way” (i.e. the way of God). “Tophet” is used as a symbol for the fires of hell where the “breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone,” kindles the flame.

Isaiah 30:18 "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."

Since Judah would not wait on the Lord to deliver, He must wait to be gracious to the nation.

The LORD will wait till they have been humiliated, and then will He graciously lift them up. God will have mercy upon them, because they are His and He loves them, not because they deserve it. The only thing they had to do was to look to God and ask for His help.

God had allowed all of this to happen to them in the way a father chastises a child, to teach them a lesson. If they will repent and come to Him for help, He will save them.

Isaiah 30:19 "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."

The prophet emphatically pointed to a result of God’s grace toward Israel, the survival of the city of Jerusalem as the center of her domain (65:9; Ezekiel 37:25, 28).

This is speaking of those who remain in Jerusalem. Zion also means the church. This could be speaking two messages. One to the physical house, who had disobeyed God, and He had forgiven them. It could also, be speaking of the church saved by the grace of God. Salvation is available to all who call on the name of the Lord.

Isaiah 30:20 "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:"

“Eyes shall see thy teachers”: After their period of judgment because of disobedience, God is to open Israel’s eyes to the soundness of the message of His prophets (29:24).

Bread and water is given to God's people, even though there is great adversity and affliction. The people will look to God to guide them. He will not be hidden from them anymore. He will teach them openly by His Spirit.

Isaiah 30:21 "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 word behind thee": The teachers will be near and the pupils' sensitive to the Lord's prophets, in strong contrast to the callousness formerly manifest (29:10-11).

They will even be guided in the path they are to walk. Their instructions will not come from other people, but will be from God. We could think of this as the Great Shepherd which leads His sheep in the way of righteousness.

Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice and follow me."

Isaiah 30:22 "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."

The Babylonian captivity rid Israel of her idolatry in fulfillment of this prophecy.

"Defile", in this verse, means to contaminate, or pronounce unclean. The Egyptians, and the other earthly kingdoms around them, had images of silver and gold that they worshipped. We see the Israelites will pronounce them as no gods and will destroy them.

The menstruous cloth should be burned. This is what Isaiah is telling them to do with these false gods. Their righteousness was as filthy rags. The only righteousness acceptable is the righteousness of Christ.

Verses 23-25: In the messianic kingdom of that future day, agriculture, cattle rising, food production and water resources will prosper. The prophet predicted the redemption of nature (Romans 8:19-21).

Isaiah 30:23 "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."

The blessings of God will be upon them and their crops, when they denounce the false gods of the world. The fields will produce bountifully, and even their cows will be fat on the pasture.

Isaiah 30:24 "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."

This is not a skimpy crop. The oxen will eat grain that was thought of as being the highest grade. They were tossed (winnowed), and all the trash removed. The fan is the same thing. This was high grade provender for the animals.

Isaiah 30:25 "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."

Powerful nations that oppress Israel will come to an end.

Mountain streams provide pure water. These streams could be channeled and used to irrigate the crops. Water was plentiful, because God had provided it.

Isaiah 30:26 "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."

"Light of the moon ... light of the sun": The benefits from the natural bodies of light will be much greater. Increase in the intensity of their light will work to people's advantage (60:19-20), not to their detriment (as in Rev. 16:8-9).

This is just saying, there will be plenty of sunshine, along with the water, to make the crops grow.

Verses 27-33: Isaiah followed the promise of Judah's redemption (verses 19-26), with a promise of Assyria's destruction.

Verses 27-28, the Lord will come suddenly upon His enemies as a great storm with its accompanying flood, to overwhelm them.

Isaiah 30:27 "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:"

"The name of the LORD": His name focuses particularly on His revealed character as Sovereign and Savior (Deut. 12:5).

Isaiah 30:28 "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."

This has to be speaking of the coming of the Lord Jesus. Jehovah Savior is what the name Jesus means. When Jesus came to the earth, He separated people out of families and separated nations, as well. The Words that came from the mouth of Jesus burned the evil out, wherever it was spoken.

We must never forget that Jesus is Judge, as well as Savior. He will judge these nations that are constantly in error, as well as the individuals. This seems to jump into the time when the wrath of God will come. The vanity of the nations is speaking of their sins.

Isaiah 30:29 "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."

While God's judgment devastated the Assyrians, the people of Jerusalem conducted a time of joyful celebration as at one of their feasts, perhaps a Passover.

While the wrath of God is being poured out on the evil nations, there will be a song of rejoicing for those of His followers. The coming into the place of worship in Jerusalem was many times led by someone playing a flute with all the procession singing.

They were on the way to the house of the Lord in His holy mountain. This could also, be speaking of the believers who sing around the throne in heaven. They sing the song of the redeemed. The mountain of the LORD, sometimes, is indicative of heaven, or the New Jerusalem, as well as the mount of God in physical Jerusalem.

Verses 30-31: Assyria in particular, but in the long range, any enemy of God's people will fall victim to divine storm and flood (verses 27 and 28).

Isaiah 30:30 "And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show 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."

This again, speaks of the wrath of God. This terrible destruction is accompanied by use of all the elements, including fire.

Isaiah 30:31 "For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, [which] smote with a rod."

God speaks judgment against Assyria.

Isaiah 30:32 "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."

With each blow of punishment against the Assyrians will come joyful celebration in Jerusalem.

Assyria shall be beaten down of God, and its enemies shall rejoice. This does not mean just Assyria, but all who have the spirit of Assyria.

Isaiah 30:33 "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."

Tophet is literally a place of abomination. Idolatrous Israel had burned to death human victims in this valley just south of Jerusalem, an area sometimes called the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 23:10). Later it became known as Gehenna, the place of refuse for the city, with constantly burning fires, symbolizing hell. The defeat was to be so complete that the fire burns continually.

"Tophet" is a place of burning. This could be speaking of the lake of fire. This is a burning place for the evil of all the world. It is waiting for the breath of Jesus to order the devil and His angels there. The false prophet, and the antichrist, and the beast will go there too.

The sad thing is that all who do not receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord will be cast into the fire, as well.

Revelation 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Revelation 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Revelation 20:14-15 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Isaiah Chapter 30 Questions

1. What caused the woe in verse 1?
2. Who are the children in verse 1?
3. Who should they take counsel of?
4. The Holy Spirit of God is our _____ and _____.
5. What is the worst thing of all that they are doing?
6. How had God shown the Pharaoh's weakness against Him?
7. The strength of Pharaoh shall be your _____.
8. Who was probably the leader in Egypt at this time spoken of?
9. Throwing in with Egypt is like _____ _____ _____ _____ church.
10. What was the prominent city of Egypt mentioned in verse 4?
11. They were carrying their treasures to Egypt in exchange for what?

12. What help does Egypt give them really?
13. What are they to do to help them remember their folly?
14. What type of people are the children called in verse 9?
15. They would not hear the _____.
16. What kind of prophecy did they want to hear?
17. What terrible thing did they say in verse 11?
18. What was the name Isaiah frequently used for God?
19. What had they put their trust in other than God?
20. Verse 13 says, their iniquity is like a _____ ready to fall.
21. God will break Judah like what?
22. Verse 15 says, in what they will be saved?
23. They decided to flee on _____.
24. Just a handful of _____ can cause an army of fearful to flee.
25. Why will God have mercy upon them?
26. What are the two messages in verse 19?
27. What is given to God's people to sustain them, even though there is great adversity and affliction?
28. Jesus said, "My sheep know my _____ and follow Me".
29. What does "defile", in verse 22, mean?
30. Their righteousness was as filthy _____.
31. Mountain streams provide _____.
32. Who is verse 27 and 28 speaking of?
33. What can the mountain of the Lord be indicative of?
34. What does "Tophet" mean?