

Isaiah Chapter 31

Verses 31:1-9: Isaiah turns his attention again to those who would advocate a pro-Egyptian alliance for the protection of Judah. He observes that they “stay” (or “lean”), “on horses” and “trust in chariots” rather than God who is a “spirit”. The use of the symbols of a “lion” and “Birds flying” reflects the national symbol of Assyria, the winged lion. The prophet again calls on his listeners to “turn” or repent. This is the very heart of his message to the wayward nation.

Isaiah 31:1 "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!"

Egypt’s horses and chariots were numerous (1 Kings 10:28-29). Its flat topography was well suited for chariotry. They would be useful to Israel against the Assyrian cavalry.

“Neither seek the Lord,” what made Israel’s turning to Egypt most despicable was her turning away from the Lord.

We saw in the last lesson that, God is terribly displeased, when they look to Egypt for help, instead of to Him. As we have said so many times, Egypt is a type of the world. Notice this stresses more than ever, that their trust is in the horses and chariots that the Egyptian army can bring against Assyria.

They have turned away from God, and sought help from the world. The world does not have answers to problems. They are good at making problems, but they have no solutions. This seems to be a totally separate prophecy against God's people trusting in the world (Egypt).

They not only trusted Egypt, but they did not trust God at all. They had no faith in the Living God.

Isaiah 31:2 "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."

Sarcastically, Isaiah countered the unwise royal counselors who had advised dependence on Egypt. “Will not call back his words”: The implied exception is, of course, when the sinful nation repented, as in the case of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-10).

God is not also wise, He is Wisdom. There are no wise who have not received their wisdom from God. Wisdom is a gift from God. Worldly wisdom is folly in God's sight. God is not only Wisdom, but is Truth and Life, as well.

When God speaks something, it is established. He will not retract His Words. He regards His Word above all else. We have spoken over and over of the blessings for those who obey and follow God, and the curse that comes against those who rebel against God.

"The house of the evildoers" here, is the Israelites. The help of them that work iniquity is Egypt.

Isaiah 31:3 "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."

"Flesh ... spirit": For example, Hezekiah wisely chose to rely on the Lord, not on the arm of flesh (2 Chronicles 32:8).

These children have chosen the world over God. They are placing their trust in things of this world. They have chosen to follow flesh, instead of spirit. The battle for the will of mankind is between the flesh and the spirit. In this particular case, they have given their will over to the flesh.

They are trusting in the flesh of horses, rather than in the Spirit of God. The flesh is weak and cannot save anyone. We see the judgment God speaks, here, is failure for the flesh of His children, who cry out to the flesh of the world to help them, and the flesh that tries to help them. They will both fail.

Just as there were no worldly answers to their problems then, there are no earthly answers to our problems now. Alcohol and drug problems cannot be solved in the flesh. They are spiritual problems that only God can cure.

People who are born of the Spirit of God overcome fleshly problems, because their hearts are changed. They no longer need drugs and alcohol to help them face the day; they have the love of Jesus instead.

Isaiah 31:4 "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."

In His defense of Jerusalem, the Lord is to be like a strong and determined lion, unafraid of shepherds summoned against him.

We know the problem will not go away with the multitude of worldly counselors. The shepherds have no control over the devil, except in the use of the name of Jesus. There is no flesh strong enough to take the prey away from the captor. Only Jesus Christ can do that.

The Lord of hosts will fight for Jerusalem and for His church. The Lord of hosts will win. The devil is no match for Jesus. Jesus is the powerful Lion of Judah.

Isaiah 31:5 "As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver [it; and] passing over he will preserve it."

This help comes from the sky as a bird that flies. A bird will hover over its young and protect them. We see that in this. God protects His own. We see in other Scriptures where the wings hover over God's people. The bird shows the tender care of the Lord for His own.

The Lord is like a hovering mother bird with a strong attachment to her little ones and a willingness to do whatever is necessary for their safety.

God has always protected Jerusalem. His presence in the wilderness wanderings taught us that. God fights for Jerusalem. His presence brought victory to His people against their enemies. We can see a similarity in the passing over and preserving Jerusalem here, with that night in Egypt when the Hebrews were protected by their God, and their first born were spared.

God always watches over His own, whether they are His Hebrew children, or whether they are the Christians of today.

Isaiah 31:6 "Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted."

The prophet called rebellious Israel to repent in light of God's gracious dealings with them (verses 4-5; 30:18-19).

The children of Israel were almost constantly falling away from God, and being forgiven, and restored. He never left them. All they had to do was repent, and turn to Him, and He would forgive them, and take them back.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

This was a constant promise to them.

Isaiah 31:7 "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."

Their biggest sin was making false gods out of silver and gold that they worshipped. God is not something created. He is Creator of all. Just as they made a golden calf when Moses was on the mount getting the 10 Commandments, they were still making idols they could touch and see to worship.

The obvious helplessness of the idols to deliver rendered them completely useless.

God is not something material that you can touch with natural hands, God is Spirit.

John 4:24 " God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

They will throw away those idols (nothings), made with hands, because they will realize their error and turn to the One True God.

Isaiah 31:8 "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."

The defeat of Assyria by other than human means matched this prophecy well (37:36-37), but other such foreign oppressors meet the same fate in the distant future of Israel, during the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7).

Assyria will not fall by the efforts of man. God will fight the Assyrian. They will fall at the Word of God (Sword). Who can fight God? No one. God is a consuming fire. It would be no problem to get the enemy to flee from this Fire of God.

This really appears to me, to be the Word of God that defeats the enemy here. Possibly, the young men shall be captured and held by these sons of God.

Isaiah 31:9 "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."

"Fire is in Zion ... furnace in Jerusalem": Both in Isaiah's near future and in the distant future, Jerusalem will be God's headquarters for bringing judgment on foreign nations. God Himself is the fire, waiting for all the enemies who attack Jerusalem.

Zion is Jerusalem, but it is also the church of the Living God. The presence of God in a fire has always been with God's people. He was a fire by night and a smoke by day. This is speaking of the presence of God.

Elijah called down the fire of God and destroyed the prophets of Baal. This is the same thing here. The sign is from God. They are afraid, not of Israel, but of the God of Israel.

Isaiah Chapter 31 Questions

1. Woe to them that go down to _____ for help.
2. _____ is a type of the world.
3. They had no faith in the _____.
4. God is not also wise, He is _____.
5. Wisdom is a _____ from God.
6. God regards His _____ above all else.
7. What do those who rebel against God have to look forward to?

8. Who is "the house of the evildoers" mentioned here?
9. The Egyptians are _____, and not God.
10. Their horses are flesh, and not _____.
11. Who will fall, when the LORD stretches forth His hand?
12. The battle for the will of man is between what two things?
13. Alcohol and drug problems are _____, not fleshly.
14. Who is the only One who can stop those problems?
15. Who overcomes fleshly problems?
16. Why are they able to overcome?
17. The only power the shepherds have to overcome is the _____ of _____.
18. Who fights for Jerusalem?
19. Who is the powerful Lion of Judah?
20. What is meant by the bird in verse 5?
21. What similarity is in verse 5 to the night in Egypt, when the Hebrews were protected?
22. When was this promise good?
23. What had been their biggest sin?
24. God is not something created, He is _____.
25. What is the meaning of idols?
26. How will the Assyrian fall?
27. What does the sword symbolize?
28. What is Zion?
29. Who destroyed the prophets of Baal?
30. Who are the Assyrians afraid of?