

Isaiah 30:8-18 – The LORD’s Response to His Rebellious People (part 1) -- Sermon Outline

Intro: Our nation seems to be under God’s judgment of wicked/corrupt rulers. What should believers do?

Need: See that God’s judgments purge His unfaithful people from the Church but prune/sanctify the true.

Theme: The holy LORD judges His rebellious people and restores a holy remnant.

1. The LORD records Israel’s rebellion against His holy word and prophets (8-11).
2. The LORD causes Israel’s despising His Word & trusting in Egypt to be its downfall (12-14)
3. The LORD will restore the holy remnant of Israel that repents and trusts in Him (15-18)

Purpose: The name Isaiah means “YHWH is salvation.” Jehovah is the thrice holy God, to whom no other so-called god can compare (Isa. 40:18), and Jehovah, after bringing Israel under judgment/exile for their rebellion/wickedness, will redeem a holy remnant of His people, returning them from exile and ultimately bringing them into His renewed kingdom through His Servant-King, Jesus.

Background info on Isaiah:

- **Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz. He came from an aristocratic family and knew royalty well. He was married and two of his sons are named Shear Jashub (“a remnant shall return”) and Maher-shalal-hasbaz (“hastening to the spoil”).
- **Date and Occasion:**
 - Isaiah was called by God as a prophet in the year of King Uzziah’s death (Isaiah 6). His prophetic ministry occurred during the 8th century BC, around 740-680, during the rule of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah prophesied of and lived through the Assyrian destruction and exile of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.
 - Isaiah prophesied similar future judgment for the southern kingdom at the hands of the Babylonians. Yet God also showed Isaiah His future restoration of Judah after the exile.
 - Isaiah was writing in an era of great political upheaval due to Assyrian imperialism. God raised Isaiah up to decry the leaders of God’s people for their hypocrisy (1:10-15), greed (5:8), self-indulgence (5:11), and cynicism (5:19).
 - God’s people had become grossly wicked, and Isaiah announces their fate of ruin and exile, but also of a holy remnant that returns and remains like a stump that is left after a tree is cut down (6:11-13). Pagan Babylon will fall (46:1-47:15) and Jehovah will save the remnant of Israel.
- **Genre:**
 - The book of Isaiah is a prophecy, or “the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”
- **Key Themes**
 - *The Lord’s Exaltation as King over His people*
 - The Lord is on a throne, high and lifted up, with the train of his robe filling the temple (6:1)
 - The Lord is judge, lawgiver, and king that will save (33:22).
 - Chapters 2-11 bring into focus the Lord’s everlasting kingship over Israel through the ideal, eternal king from the line of David who is Immanuel/God-with-us (7:14) rather than Israel’s present fallible, temporal kings.
 - This King is mighty God and everlasting Father (9:6), reigning on the throne of His father David forever (9:7) and by the Spirit ruling the nations of the world in righteousness (11:5, 10).
 - The Servant of the Lord will come humbly (53:2) and be cut off from the land and stricken for God’s people (53:8-9), yet He will be sustained and will see His

- seed and be satisfied in justifying many, ultimately being honored and exalted by the Father above all (53:10-12).
- This Servant of the Lord is the Lord Jesus, for as Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up (6:1), likewise he sees the servant of the Lord “high and lifted up” (52:13).
 - **John 12:41** indicates that Isaiah in fact saw the glory of Jesus and spoke of Him.
- The Lord’s defining characteristic of holiness
- The Seraphim praise Jehovah as “Holy, holy, holy” (6:3).
 - Isaiah frequently refers to God as the “Holy One of Israel”. It is used twelve times in Isaiah 1-39 and thirteen times in Isaiah 40-66, and is only elsewhere used among all the prophets by Jeremiah, twice in Jer. 50:29 and 51:5. God is hallowed in His righteousness (5:16) and must be regarded as holy (10:17; 29:23; 8:13). His dwelling, mountain, sanctuary, even the road that leads to Zion, is described as holy. ***His people must be holy as well*** (4:3; 62:12).
 - Isaiah’s entire message indicates that God is holy and makes His people holy, indeed all that comes into contact with Him must be holy.
- The Lord’s domain is universal
- The whole earth is full of His glory, unlike the local pagan deities (6:3).
 - His hand is stretched out over all nations and will crush the Assyrians in His own land that He gave to His covenant people, ultimately all the earth (14:24-26).
 - He created the universe (40:28) and from His sovereign power will raise up Cyrus the Medo-Persian to let His people go free (45:12-13).
 - Ultimately the Lord will destroy death forever from all the earth and will redeem and comfort His people (25:7-8).
- The Lord’s own people are sinful
- Isaiah opens by addressing “a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity” that have forsaken the Lord and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger (1:4).
 - Isaiah, upon seeing the Lord’s holiness, cries out, “Woe is me!” and recognizes his own defilement and the defilement of God’s people (6:5).
 - Israel’s sins have burdened the Lord (43:24) and separated them from God, causing Him to hide His face from them so that He does not hear them (59:2).
 - Nevertheless, the Lord will forgive their sins, not by overlooking them, but in His righteousness He will make atonement (27:9; 33:24) through His special Servant who will be crushed, bearing the iniquity of God’s people (Isa. 53:5, 11).
- The Lord’s people are unable to see/hear His words
- The people will see but not perceive, hear but not understand Isaiah’s message as part of God’s judgment on them for sinning against the Lord (6:9-10). Curse and blessing are understood in the book as being able to perceive vs. not being able.
 - The prophets, the eyes of the nation, have been closed by the Lord (29:10) so that they are spiritually blind (42:19), having no spiritual sight (59:10).
 - But the Lord will cause the eyes of the blind to see (29:18) the king in His beauty as Isaiah did when called by God (33:17).
 - Indeed, the special Servant of the Lord (Christ) is given the task of opening the spiritually blind eyes of His people (42:7) as God’s people in darkness will see the light of Christ, and He will reign over the earth by His kingdom, establishing it with righteousness and justice forever (9:2, 6-7).
- The Lord’s people will be exiled but later a holy remnant is exalted/restored to the land.
- Isaiah is commissioned by God to prophesy to an unhearing, hard-hearted people until Jehovah destroys them, lays the land to waste, and the people are scattered (6:9-12).

- Yet God promises restoration after the exile as a holy remnant seed will remain like the stump of a tree after it is cut down (6:13b).
 - This theme is given in chapter 6, at the very commencing of Isaiah's call, and the theme of exile for both the northern and southern kingdom but return/restoration for the holy remnant seed is a focus throughout the book of Isaiah.
 - The Lord's inclusion of Gentiles in the restoration of His people ushers in a new era
 - The inclusion of the Gentiles as a key part of the restored Israel is a major theme throughout Isaiah (2:3; 11:10; 14:1; 18:7; 24:14-16; 25:6-8; 40:3-5; 49:6; 55:5; 56:7-8; 60:3, 10; 66:19-21).
 - Indeed, the ultimate restoration is so great that it foretells of a renewed heavens and earth (30:26; 65:17-18, 21, 25; 66:22-23) accomplished by Christ.
- **Isaiah in Redemptive History/the larger story and context of all Scripture**
 - Isaiah prophesies of the suffering Servant, who is none other than Jesus Christ, who will come to bear the iniquities of His people (Isa. 53) and open the eyes of the elect. John 12:41 says that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Him. Jesus as Servant of the Lord, having fulfilled all that the Father had sent and told Him to do, is now exalted at the right hand of the Father. The servant of the Lord is high and lifted up (52:13), and the Lord Himself is described as the "high and lofty one" in 57:15.
 - Isaiah connects for the Israelites of old and Christians today, the ideal Davidic Messiah in the early chapters with the Suffering Servant of the Lord in later chapters. Jesus is both the Davidic Messiah/King and the Suffering Servant. The Servant of the Lord has God's Spirit put upon Him to establish justice in the earth (42:1-4) just as the Davidic Messiah has the Spirit and is tasked with establishing justice on the earth (9:7; 11:2-5).
 - The book of Isaiah shows how redemption will come to God's people, through the sacrifice of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who will make atonement for sin by His blood, and will be raised to newness of life and exalted to the right hand of the Father in His own perfect righteousness.
 - This connection of prior suffering/humiliation in order to have future restoration/exaltation was not grasped by the Israelites, nor by Christ's disciples initially. They looked for the glorious messianic kingdom without the suffering Messiah.
 - The Church today often misses this connection as well. The call to take up the cross and follow after Christ is ignored, leading to all sorts of triumphalistic errors, false expectations of an easy life free of bitter providences and difficult trials and tribulations.
 - The book of Isaiah, then, teaches the Church to persevere in the faith, for "we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).
 - Isaiah began with a wicked Jerusalem/Zion whose worship is despised by Jehovah, but ends with a purified, righteous Jerusalem/Zion in which Jehovah dwells and the nations flock to in order to offer up worship pleasing to the Lord. The New Jerusalem is connected with the prophecy of the New Creation (65:17-18), which is fully realized when Christ returns, giving comfort both to Isaiah's original audience and the Church today of the future restoration of all things under the banner of Christ for all eternity.

I. The LORD records Israel's rebellion against His holy word and prophets (8-11).

A. God compels Isaiah to write/record the wickedness of Israel as a witness against them.

1. In **30:1-7** we see that Jehovah/the covenant Lord's "rebellious children" [30:1; also 30:9] of Israel take counsel in pagan Egypt, compounding their sin, rather than trusting in the LORD and His words/counsel/Spirit for deliverance from the mighty Assyrians.
2. The severity of Israel's sin is so great that God says Isaiah must "now go" (v. 8) to "write" & "note/mark" their turning to Egypt for strength/help (30:6-7) and their refusal to hear God and His law/prophets *straightaway* (30:9-11).

- B. V. 8, the redundancy of recording Israel's rebellion on a "tablet" and a "scroll" underscores the need to have this witness preserved for all future generations/all time/"forever and ever".
1. It is written "before them"/in their presence b/c they must know, as those soon to endure Assyrian captivity & exile, of Jehovah's righteous dealings/judgment for their rebellion.
 2. The word translated "tablet" is the same word used of the two "tables" of stone that God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai, which contained the 10 commandments, showing the permanency and weightiness of what is recorded against Israel.
 3. The tablets of stone containing the 10 commandments remained in the ark of the covenant for future generations of Israelites, just as these words would remain as a testimony to Israel's wickedness and God's justice and faithfulness.
- C. The word "scroll" is used to denote a "bill" of divorcement (Dt. 24:1) and is used of God's "scroll/book" where He blots out the names of those who sin against Him, Ex. 32:33.
1. God is blotting out His rebellious people, but also will restore a faithful remnant.
 2. "Note" indicates marking/writing as a decree. God is noting/decreeing Israel's rebellion.
- D. "That it may be" in v. 8 is a command. God commands His decree/record of Israel's rebellion last forever as a witness against them and a warning to future generations.
1. **NOTE:** The indication is that rebellious Israel has apostatized, & vv. 9-11 show us how they've done so.
 2. **Take heed:** without God's saving grace in Christ, the written record/decreed of our sins against the LORD would stand forever, & we'd be blotted out of His book.
- E. V. 9, "Rebellious" shows continuity with V. 1/"rebellious children".
1. Israel obstinately refuses the covenant LORD & His law by turning to idols/pagan nations.
 2. In rebelling, Israel is "lying children"/deceitful & false sons, "not willing to hear the law of the LORD." They take on the LORD's name but hate His law (deceit), and so are false sons.
 3. God's "law"/torah/instructions given to them under Moses and summarized in the 10 commandments are the words/law of His covenant with His people. Israel is rejecting their covenant LORD and His law, refusing it in favor of the Egyptian's words/rule.
 4. Thus they are lying/false sons, *always* refusing to hear God's voice but listening to Satan's in Egypt rather than obeying God's law and His prophets in His/Israel's land.
- F. **NOTE:** Those who love the Lord hear His law and obey Him from the heart, by His Spirit.
1. But when many of His people in a given nation grow dull of hearing, we can expect His judgment upon them and likely their nation, as the Church fails to be salt and light in it.
- G. V. 10, The seers and prophets are essentially the same thing, 1 Sam. 9:9. God chose His seers/prophets and had them tell His people what was to come, forewarning them.
1. But Israel no longer cares and does not want to see/hear about their sin anymore.
 2. They don't want the prophets telling them "right things/straight things" of God's law.
 3. Instead they want the crooked things that are "smooth"/flattering to the flesh, they want words from God that are "deceits"/illusions to gratify their sinful lusts/imaginings.
 4. Rebellious Israel is actually commanding the prophets to prophesy lies supposedly from Jehovah, which would make them false prophets that must be stoned (Deut. 18:20).
 5. **NOTE:** This is just what many false churches and false ministers do today, gratifying the lusts of the flesh of those who "depart from the faith by giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron" (**I Tim. 4:1-2**). Our nation is full of false churches gratifying the flesh.
 - a. True ministers of God must preach His Word in season and out of season faithfully, even when God's people do not wish to heed sound doctrine but go astray in their desires, with itching ears heaping up for themselves false teachers, turning away from the truth to the fables/illusions that flatter them (**2 Tim. 4:1-5**).

- b. God's people must desire the pure milk of His word (**I Pet. 2:2**) to grow spiritually; even though it offends the sinful flesh, we are pointed to Christ for our strength.
- H. V. 11, The rebellious children of Israel, rather than submitting to God's commands through His prophets, seek again to command His prophets and defy Him with wicked demands.
 - 1. "***Get out of the way***" demands the prophets/seers would stop bothering them with gloom and doom messages concerning their sin and rebellion.
 - 2. Their preaching/proclaiming/exhorting Israel to repent has wearied their wicked hearts.
 - 3. They wish the prophets would cease from their way/presence, and cease from proclaiming the way of righteousness as found in God's law/torah.
 - 4. "***Depart from the path***" If the prophets listen to wicked Israel's demands to prophesy lies/deceit, their own "smooth" teachings will cause them to depart from God's path.
 - 5. Wicked Israel has leaders that cause them to err by destroying God's holy way/paths/law (**Isa. 3:12**), and they want the prophets to do likewise by prophesying flattering lies.
 - 6. The culminating effect would be that the prophets/seers "***cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us,***" removing the Holy One of Israel, their covenant Lord, from Israel.
 - 7. Rebellious Israel hates holiness and so hates their holy LORD and His holy law.
 - 8. They want His law, His messengers, and He Himself, far from them, so they can be unholy without a guilty conscience or fear of punishment from their holy LORD.
 - 9. **NOTE:** Do not deceive yourself thinking you can be holy apart from loving God's holy law and hearing God's holy word from His chosen messengers. Pursue biblical teaching.

II. The LORD causes Israel's despising His Word & trusting in Egypt to be its downfall (12-14)

- A. V. 12, The Holy One of Israel decries Israel's betraying Him/His Word for unholy Egypt.
 - 1. "***The Holy one of Israel***" is a key name for God in the book of Isaiah.
 - 2. Isaiah emphasizes God's holiness throughout; that He must be regarded as holy (8:13; 29:23), & that Israel & Isaiah himself are terribly unholy/unclean before the thrice Holy One (Isa. 6:1-5), apart from the Holy One purging their sin/iniquity (Isa 6:6-7).
 - 3. Everything God comes near must be holy. God's holiness, His being exalted and set apart above all other things, is seen in His own righteousness/right dealings with His people.
 - 4. God's law is straight and true, pure and holy, unlike rebellious Israel, who refuse to hear God's holy law and instead turn south to wicked Egypt and "***rely***" upon "***oppression & perversity,***" living in *crooked, false* ways/paths of unholiness/unrighteousness.
 - 5. God's commissioning Isaiah as prophet is seen in the seraph taking the coal from the altar and removing Isaiah's sin/iniquity from his mouth. Now Isaiah is God's holy mouthpiece to unholy Israel, and yet Israel will not hear/see/want God's holiness/cleansing.
 - 6. Israel's hearts are dull and made dull by God's law/word, until God judges them and their "***cities are laid waste and without inhabitant***" & the LORD "***has removed men far away***".
- B. This removal/exile comes by God's "***hired razor***" of Assyria, (**Isa. 7:20; 8:7-8**).
 - 1. Israel trusts in Egypt to save them from this threat rather than their Holy LORD, but Pharaoh's strength is Israel's shame (30:3) and Egypt's help is all in vain (**30:7**).
 - 2. Israel's iniquity/vain confidence in Egypt will be crushed by God (**30:13-14**) through the invading Assyrians, purging Israel until only a tenth/holy stump remains of the "***unholy***" tree, and the stump repents/turns to the Holy One of Israel for deliverance (**Isa. 6:13**).
- C. V. 12, Israel "***despises***"/hates God's word/law, not loving it like King David (Ps. 119:97) but putting "***trust***" /confidence in Egypt/pagan "***oppression,***" dealing with others harshly/cruelly for selfish gain, and exploiting rather than dealing justly with others.
- D. This "***perversity***" means Israel is "***going the perverse way***" as Israel "***relies***" /leans upon Egypt.

 - 1. Their wicked hearts/desires led them to take trips to Egypt and learn from Pharaoh's oppressive, enslaving rule. Israel's physical journey to Egypt depicts their spiritual departure from the LORD's holy paths/words/law.

2. Egypt's physical land even reflected its spiritual bankruptcy and danger. It is a land riddled with trouble and anguish, with lions, vipers, and fiery flying serpents (30:6).
3. Israel brings to Egypt its riches to multiply ease/luxury, but this will prove unprofitable, as God calls Egypt Rahab-Hem-Shebeth/"*The boasters sit idle*," doing nothing (30:6-7).
4. The LORD warns of His destruction upon Egypt & those relying upon its aid, **Isa. 31:1-3**.
- E. NOTE: In our business dealings/partnerships, we must not "rely" upon oppressive/perverse tactics for dishonest gain, but we should rather deal honestly and trust in God's provision.
 1. Wicked partners will not come to your aid when in need, just as Egypt failed Israel.
 2. Our nation has many corrupt corporations colluding with government and technology, oppressing its people. We should consider who we do business with/services we pay for, and we must take care not to trust/believe the deceptions of dishonest news media.
 3. Egypt's chariots and horsemen seem strong, and so Israel placed wicked hope in them.
 4. But Egyptian strength is nothing compared to the Holy One of Israel's, who has long ago delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery/supposed might, drowning its horsemen/chariots in the Red Sea (**Ex. 15:19**). God's people have forgotten the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-19).
 5. We too, as God's people/true Israel today, can easily forget the great deliverances God has accomplished for His people/us, especially in the face of great personal or national trials.
 6. But we must remember them and trust/rely upon the LORD alone to guide and direct us, not perishing princes/presidents who give no hope (**Ps. 146:3-4**).
 7. Hope in the LORD, who made all and upholds truth and justice and gives our daily bread no matter how "hopeless" things seem for us in the various trials we face in life (146:5-7).
- F. 13, B/C of Israel's reliance upon Egypt & forsaking the LORD, His promised judgment comes.
 1. Their "*iniquity*"/guilt in turning their back on God provokes His anger, Isa. 1:4.
 2. Israel has oppressed & enslaved, multiplied houses & lived for drunkenness (5:7-12), & in their rebellion calls evil good, good evil, robbing the righteous of justice for bribes (5:23).
 3. Therefore the LORD will make His people captive and weak, humbled, while He in His holy and just judgment shall be exalted in righteousness (5:13-16).
- G. All this "*iniquity*" will be "*like a breach about to fall*". Israel has not stumbled into sin, but pursued it headlong, drawing it in as with cords and egging on God's judgment (Isa. 5:19).
 1. "**Breach**" is a gap/rupture, indicating a break in a wall of defense, but also used of God's wrath breaking out as it is here in judgment. Israel's ruin is their own doing, a breach they created that is as a "*bulge in a high wall*". The bulge swells as Israel continues to rebel.
 2. The imagery is of Israel departing from God's high walls of protection as found in His holy law/paths. Israel is tearing them down in their sin, rejecting His law/paths/prophets.
- H. NOTE: God's people are secure when buttressed by God's law, but when they depart His law/church/gospel, they tear down God's spiritual protection, and the enemy overcomes them.
 1. God may discipline his children for a season with sin and its consequences, but punishes His false/apostate children with spiritual ruin for their persistent, defiant rebellion.
 2. If the H.S. convicts & we repent when God disciplines us, we know we're His true children.
- I. This swelling breach in Israel will "*suddenly, in an instant*," come breaking/crashing down.
 1. This is how the Holy One of Israel speaks to his rebellious children, warning them of their coming destruction by the Assyrians who were invading the northern kingdom of Israel.
 2. Total collapse/ruin is obvious/near at hand, but the exact moment comes without warning.
 3. God in His holiness cannot dwell with His unholy people, who refuse to repent so they can be cleansed and made holy.
 4. Israel's vain trust in Egypt means their removal from the Holy One of Israel's presence in the promised land. Their physical judgment reflects their spiritual state – unholy, dead in their sins and apart from God's blessing/saving presence.

- J. V. 14, Israel's iniquity in trusting in Egypt against the Assyrians is a giant breach in their defenses, rather than a fortification. God will make Egypt's "strength" like a crumbled wall.
1. God breaks Israel's confidence in Egypt "like the breaking of the potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare" indicating complete destruction, being crushed fine.
 2. Israel will not attempt to put back the broken pieces of vain confidence in Egypt. But for the holy remnant that repents/returns to Jehovah, He will bind up their "breach" (30:26).
- K. V. 14 is incredibly emphatic. The thorough breaking and inability to find among the crushed "fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water from the cistern" recalls Moses in his hot anger burning the golden calf, grinding it into powder, casting it upon the water, and making the Israelites drink it for their idolatrous rebellion (**Ex. 32:20**).
1. Israel's present rebellion is equally heinous, and so they must "drink their iniquity" in that their sinful confidence in Egypt will lead to their demise and destruction by the Assyrians.
 2. Even the jagged "shards" of a broken pot might have some usefulness/to get coals from the hearth to make fire/to scoop up water for drinking.
 3. But God will so thoroughly punish/crush Israel in His fierce anger/righteous judgment that Israel will be reduced to slaves again in a God-forsaken land, without a "shard" of hope in Egypt or themselves.
 4. The LORD is bringing His people low, reducing them to rubble & scattering them, in order to gather them up again when they cry out to Him alone for help (Is. 30:19).
 5. It is at this point that Israel will be enabled to see and hear God's teachers/prophets (30:20) and will be convicted from the heart that their false gods/idols make them unclean/unholy, and they will cast them away in disgust (30:22).
 6. This leads to God's blessing Israel's land and His anger/judgment turning to Assyria, the destroyers/enslavers of His people Israel. God will show mercy and deliver His repentant people from the Assyrians (30:30-31), enslaving them who once enslaved Israel (31:4-9).
- L. CONC: You must desire God's Word and Church to continually forge you into His image.
1. May the Lord bring us low, to see sin, repent in humility, & look to His law to live according to His good pleasure, and for our delight; then He will lift us up over the wicked.
 2. We must not compromise with the wicked in our day, or fear them or turn to them for aid. We must trust in the Lord, be strengthened in one another, and compel others to serve Christ.
 3. Let us pray!