

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 72

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The Book of Isaiah Message Seventy-Two

GOD

PROTECTS JERUSALEM

July 5, 2020
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Isaiah 31:1-9

¹ Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely 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 Jehovah! 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 evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. ³ Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.

⁴ For thus saith Jehovah unto me, As the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so will Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof. ⁵ As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it. ⁶ Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. ⁷ For in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin. ⁸ And the Assyrian shall fall by the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become subject to taskwork. ⁹ And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem (ASV, 1901).

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this chapter provides the same warning against seeking the help of Egypt as was expressed in the last chapter. However, even in the midst of disastrous consequences of Israel's disobedience, The Lord will appear. As the lion is not fearful of the multitude of the shepherds gathered against him, so shall the Heavenly Host laugh to scorn the nations against Him. And though, the heathen rage, and the nations imagine a vain thing, yet shall He have them in ridicule.

Psalm 2:1-12

¹ Why do the nations rage, And the peoples meditate a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against Jehovah, and

against his anointed, saying, ³Let us break their bonds asunder, And cast away their cords from us. ⁴He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: The Lord will have them in derision. ⁵Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, And vex them in his sore displeasure: ⁶Yet I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion. ⁷I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee. ⁸Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. ⁹Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. ¹⁰Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. ¹¹Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, For his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him (ASV, 1901).

Then finally shall Israel trust God and then return, and acknowledge him as their Messiah and King, and shall say “*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,*”. On that day shall be the destruction of their last enemy, Antichrist, who shall be destroyed by the Lord Himself.

The natural man tends to have false confidence in himself and the material. Here there is a strong reiteration of the same earlier warning only this time it is accompanied with a “*woe*” pronounced upon it. God wants us to trust in Him for our circumstances. Because of the conditions in the earth as a result of the Fall we each have the danger of that “*woe*” being on us, for we each have our “*Egypt*.” Our dependence on Him is difficult to achieve unless we let the Holy Spirit lead us. This really characterizes Christianity today. Our politicians, and armed forces are visible and practical. We must trust in God as to how He would use them and not to trust in them as His replacement. Not to do so is what the Lord criticizes Israel for doing, placing their trust in Egypt for help. The Hebrew text expresses the road to Egypt is always a “*going down,*” a descent, a lowering of moral standing and dignity, for man’s true place of trust is in the Lord.

WOE TO THOSE THAT TRUST IN THE MATERIAL

Isaiah 31:1

¹ Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely 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 Jehovah (ASV, 1901)!

This chapter begins by demonstrating the example of those in Israel who placed their trust in the material illustrated as horses and chariots. Israel’s problem is the same today as it was in the eighth century B.C. It is trusting in the material and not the Spiritual, and that leads to God’s judgment.

King David realized the futility of placing one’s trust for security in the material instead of depending on the Spiritual realization of the Lord. He expresses it similarly in Psalm twenty.

Psalm 20:1–9

The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble;

The name of the God of Jacob defend thee; ² Send thee help from the sanctuary, And strengthen thee out of Zion; ³Remember all thy offerings, And accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah. ⁴ Grant thee according to thine own heart, And fulfil all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners: The LORD fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; He will hear him from his holy heaven With the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: But we are risen, and stand upright. ⁹ Save, LORD: Let the king hear us when we call (ASV, 1901).

GOD WILL BRING EVIL

Isaiah 31:2

²Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity (ASV, 1901).

He that is, God, the Holy One of Israel, is, whom they disregarded. He is vastly far wiser than the Egyptians, where they sought help, and who were thought to be a wise and a politically astute people. The Jews thought even wiser than themselves. As a result, God says *He will bring evil*; the evil of punishment or affliction on wicked men, which He has threatened, and which they could not escape. As a result of this false dependence on Egypt God says *He will not call back his words*; his threatenings delivered by the prophets. God does not repent or repeal what He has given to the earth as instructions and warnings, He will not revoke but fulfil and accomplish, exactly what He has said He will do. It is only the weak willed and and unwise what they did by trying to replace Him with the material because *He will arise against the house of evil-doers*. There are strong consequences for denying and disobeying God. He also included those who lead His people away from Him as the text says, *and against the help of them that work iniquity*; that is, against the Egyptians, the helpers of the Jews, who were workers of iniquity, and therefore their help and hope would be in vain. They should not to be sought for help, or trusted in, since, God being against them, it would be to no purpose, as He is against all workers of iniquity. So, this is a warning that He would bring evil disaster and would not retract (recall) His words. He always executes what He says He is going to do.

MEN ARE NOT GOD

Isaiah 31:3

³Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.

This verse gives the reason why Egypt will perish and why Judah must not depend upon them. Egypt is man and not God. The distinction is metaphysical, designed to explain the difference between the Creator and the creature. This is illustrated in the horses of Egypt in which Judah wanted to place her trust. Again, they are flesh and not spirit. Here the contrast is not just

between what is material and what is nonmaterial, but between man and God. The horses are merely flesh, they are creatures of flesh and blood; they are not spirit, not supernatural, not divine. They can do only what flesh can do, not what spirit can perform. So as the Psalmist asks, “*What can flesh do to me?*” (Psalm 56:4) he is simply saying that man the creature cannot harm him, spiritually. The contrast is also expressed in Zechariah 4:6, “*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*” Jehovah and Egypt are set in contrast one to another. One is a true help, the other not; the people of God chose what is not a true help.

The Lord’s people should have remembered that the Egyptians were nothing but frail, mortal men and not God, and they had no divine power. Consequently, when the Lord would stretch out his hand to punish both he that helpeth (Egypt) and he that was helped (Judah), both of them would come to an undesirable end.

He is powerful, and in stretching out His hand brings about the downfall of both Egypt and the Israelites who trust in Egypt. Egypt the helper stumbles and Judah the helped falls. There is a slightly different attitude and reasoning between this and the preceding chapter. Chapter thirty reveals that Judah sought help from Egypt and falsely trusted in them. Egypt’s help, brought disgrace upon them. In this chapter there is a much stronger offence to God. Not only does Judah seek help from Egypt but she also rejects the help of the Lord. It is her unbelief that is the greater sin. This is what causes the Lord who brings Israel and the country to which she had turned for help to shame.

GOD IS NOT INTIMIDATED

Isaiah 31:4–5

⁴For thus saith Jehovah unto me, As the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so will Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof. ⁵As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it (ASV, 1901).

The Lord’s judgment which will be a disaster could not be averted. It would be futile to attempt to circumvent or thwart the Lord’s will. Just as a lion cannot be frightened away by the shouts of the shepherds, so the Lord would not be prevented by any earthly power or fleshly plan from accomplishing His purposes in chastening Judah and Egypt. The two images of the animal kingdom provide two of God’s characteristics. The image of the “lion” illustrates the fearless power of the lion to chasten His sinning people, and the figure of the birds portrays His tender, affection for them.

It is important to realize that just as the Lord of hosts will fight against Israel to correct them, so also will He provide protection over Jerusalem. The central and basic thought of the verse is protection. In covering or surrounding, the Lord will deliver; and in passing over He will save. These two comparisons complement one another. First, God is compared with a strong lion, bold, unafraid, powerful; then with tender and loving birds which protect their nest. He who

protects is He who is strong as a lion to accomplish His purposes. The Lord will correct but, never destroy Israel.

Jeremiah 31:35–37

³⁵Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar; Jehovah of hosts is his name: ³⁶If these ordinances depart from before me, saith Jehovah, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. ³⁷Thus saith Jehovah: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

TURN ONLY TO THE LORD FOR PROTECTION

Isaiah 31:6–7

⁶Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. ⁷For in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin (ASV, 1901).

Having now assured Israel of the Lord's protection, Isaiah now commands them to return to God. Even though their rebellion against Him has been severe, nevertheless, only God is able to help and waits to welcome them upon their return to Him. When deliverance is finally realized, Israel will be convinced of the vanity and insufficiency of their idols to help them, and of their sin in worshipping them. Only when they shall be brought to repentance for it, and turn to the Lord as an evidence of it shall: *every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold*; with contempt and abhorrence of them. Now as the word signifies; shall every man *his own idol*, and even those that were of the greatest value, which were made of gold and silver: *which your own hands have made unto you for a sin*; their idols were the work of their own hands, and were made by them in order to commit sin with, the sin of idolatry. It was a sin to make such idols, especially to worship them and it was a sin to worship them, and the result of it was deserved punishment.

When the nation Israel is regenerated at the end of the tribulation then they will finally realize the utter folly of idolatry and will return to their dependence upon the Lord. They will be returning to Him from whom they deeply revolted and cast away their Idols, which they made for themselves as sin.

THE DOWNFALL OF ASSYRIA

Isaiah 31:8-9.

⁸And the Assyrian shall fall by the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become subject to taskwork. ⁹And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his

princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem (ASV, 1901).

The Lord Himself, not a human power, will intervene to overthrow Assyria. The Assyrian would fall by a sword, not of man. This reaches its ultimate fulfillment in the Antichrist of the end time (Revelation 19:20; 20:10), of which the Assyrian is a model, shadow or type. The world he will rule (Assyria) represents the kingdom of man, which would attempt to dominate all the earth. That is what Gog as well as the Antichrist will try to achieve to no avail.

The two major prophecies yet to come where nations are thwarted by God for attacking Israel are the Allied Nations coming against Israel and the Campaign of Armageddon.

The Allied Invasion of Israel is a group of coalition forces, which have severely persecuted Israel in years past. The world is setting the stage for this prophecy to be fulfilled by various peace negotiations and demanding that Israel give up land and most importantly their security.

The biblical text as stated in Ezekiel 38:1-39:16 describe an invasion of Israel from the north and the subsequent total destruction of the coalition of invading forces once they reach the area of *the mountains of Israel*. It appears that there is a preemptive attack by the Israelites with a nuclear weapons exchange that results in a seven-year clean-up period. Israel is violated in this invasion, arousing God's anger to that He moves out in judgment to destroy the invading army. This is followed by how the invading army is disposed of and destroyed. Several causes are listed: earthquake, civil war breaking out among the invading soldiers themselves, pestilence, blood, flood, hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Since these things totally destroy the invading army without the aid of other nations, God's purpose is seen as succeeding in its objective. God is indeed sanctified in the eyes of many people.

In the Campaign of Armageddon, the Antichrist will invade Jerusalem. From the Valley of Jezreel the armies of the Antichrist which are all the nations of the world gather against Jerusalem. Jerusalem will temporarily fall into Gentile hands, and half of the Jewish population will be taken into slavery while the other half will be allowed to remain in the city to await a later fate. The capture of Jerusalem by the forces of the Antichrist will not come easily. God will greatly energize the Jews to withstand the attack to a great degree, causing heavy losses to the armies of the Antichrist. Zechariah 12:3 stated that all these nations that burden themselves with Jerusalem will be sorely wounded, and Jerusalem will become truly burdensome to them. The empowerment of the Jewish forces is described in Zechariah 12:4-9.

The capture of the city of Jerusalem is temporarily allowed by God just prior to the personal return of Jesus the Messiah. In the battle for Jerusalem, the Jewish military leaders will be so energized that they appear to strike down the enemy as quickly as a torch begins to burn up wood that is very dry. The feeble among the Jews take on the strength of David, and the David's among them take on the strength of the Angel of Jehovah. This is one of the ways God will begin destroying the nations that have come against Jerusalem. Once again as the Lord promised He will always protect Jerusalem and not allow it to be obliterated.

Next message: CHRIST THE MESSIANIC KING COMES
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