

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

July 25, 2010

“Trusting God, Not Egypt”

Focal Passage:

Isaiah 30:1-26

Cross References: Isaiah 31-38; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-17; Zechariah 4:6

Central Idea: God was offended that His people would seek aid from Egypt instead of turning to Him.

Lesson Idea: We should make sure that our allegiance is wholly to God and seek Him when we need strength or wisdom. Seeking worldly plans or powers will insult God and incur defeat.

Background: During times when their nations were threatened, kings often sought the aid and protection of more powerful nations by paying tribute to them. During Isaiah’s time, the northern tribes of Israel had been defeated by the powerful Assyrian army and taken into captivity. The Assyrians then turned their attention to conquering Judah. King Hezekiah was tempted to enlist aid from one of the world’s strongest nations, Egypt. But God through Isaiah convinced them that He would consider their lack of faith as an act of rebellion against the LORD.

In chapters 30-31 Isaiah explains why Judah should not count on Egypt, but should seek the LORD’s help instead. The result is found in chapters 36-37 (as well as being recorded in 2 Kings 18-19 and 2 Chronicles 32). When Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed, God delivered in a mighty and unmistakably spiritual victory.

Bible in a Year Readings

July 18-25, 2010

Jul 18 Isaiah 12 - 14
Jul 19 Isaiah 15 - 19
Jul 20 Isaiah 20 - 24
Jul 21 Isaiah 25 - 28
Jul 22 Isaiah 29 - 31
Jul 23 Isaiah 32 - 34
Jul 24 Isaiah 35 - 37
Jul 25 Isaiah 38 - 40

Highlights of the Week:

Isaiah 12: Song of Joyous Praise
Isaiah 13-23: Judgment on the Nations
Isaiah 26: Song of God’s Protection
Isaiah 30: Warning against Egyptian alliance
Isaiah 31: Help Comes from God
Isaiah 36-37: Sennacherib vs Hezekiah and God
Isaiah 38: Hezekiah healed

Isaiah 30:1-7

Warning against Egyptian Alliance

1 *“Woe to the rebellious children,” declares the LORD,
“Who execute a plan, but not Mine,
And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin;
2 Who proceed down to Egypt*

Without consulting Me,

To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh

And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

3 *"Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame*

And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation.

4 *"For their princes are at Zoan*

And their ambassadors arrive at Hanes.

5 *"Everyone will be ashamed because of a people who cannot profit them,*

Who are not for help or profit, but for shame and also for reproach."

6 *The oracle concerning the beasts of the Negev.*

Through a land of distress and anguish,

From where come lioness and lion, viper and flying serpent,

They carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys

And their treasures on camels' humps,

To a people who cannot profit them;

7 *Even Egypt, whose help is vain and empty.*

Therefore, I have called her

"Rahab who has been exterminated."

DISCUSSION:

- In v 1-2 what does God accuse His "rebellious children" of doing?
- What does it mean to "make an alliance but not of My Spirit?"
- What happens in your life when you make plans without consulting the LORD?
- What does v 3 say would happen if they sought safety and shelter from Egypt? See also v 5.
- Zoan and Hanes were both important cities in Egypt at this time. Zoan was located on the Nile delta and was representative of Egyptian culture and also associated with the plagues that the LORD sent on them prior to the Exodus. (see Ps 78:10-12) Why would remembering the plagues and the Exodus help Judah to trust God instead of Egypt?
- V 6 seems to indicate that the ambassadors who would take bribes to Egypt would face more dangers on the journey than any help they would receive.
- "Rahab" was the name of the Egyptian symbol of power, a dragon. Isaiah indicates that Rahab was powerless to help because it had been "exterminated." The NIV brings out this impotence by calling her "Rahab the do-nothing." What are things that people depend upon today that are really powerless to help in situations that really matter? Give an example.

Isaiah 30:8-17

Rejection of the Word of the LORD

8 *Now go, write it on a tablet before them And inscribe it on a scroll,*

That it may serve in the time to come

As a witness forever.

9 *For this is a rebellious people, false sons,*

Sons who refuse to listen

To the instruction of the LORD;

10 *Who say to the seers, "You must not see visions";*

And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right,

Speak to us pleasant words,

Prophesy illusions.

11 *"Get out of the way, turn aside from the path,*

Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."

12 *Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel,*

"Since you have rejected this word

And have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them,

13 *Therefore this iniquity will be to you*

Like a breach about to fall,

A bulge in a high wall,

Whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant,

14 *Whose collapse is like the smashing of a potter's jar,*

So ruthlessly shattered

That a sherd will not be found among its pieces

To take fire from a hearth

Or to scoop water from a cistern."

15 *For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said,*

"In repentance and rest you will be saved,

In quietness and trust is your strength."

But you were not willing,

16 *And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses,"*

Therefore you shall flee!

"And we will ride on swift horses,"

Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift.

17 *One thousand will flee at the threat of one man;*

You will flee at the threat of five,

Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top

And as a signal on a hill.

DISCUSSION:

- In v 8-11 what had happened to the people's attitude towards the Word of God?
- Compare v 10-11 to 2 Timothy 4:3-4.
- Why is it dangerous to preach and teach only what people want to hear?
- In v 12-14 what did God say would be the outcome of rejecting His Word?
- What will happen in people's lives today if they refuse to listen to God's Word?
- What does v 15 promise would bring salvation and strength?
- In v 16-17 they traded their faith in God for a fast horse. Why was that such a bad bargain?

Isaiah 30:18-26

God Is Gracious and Just

18 *Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,*

And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.

For the LORD is a God of justice;

How blessed are all those who long for Him.

19 *O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. **20** Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. **21** Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left. **22** And you will defile your graven images overlaid with silver, and your molten images plated with gold. You will scatter them as an impure thing, and say to them, "Be gone!"*

23 Then He will give you rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread from the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on that day your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture. **24** Also the oxen and the donkeys which work the ground will eat salted fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. **25** On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. **26** The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven days, on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted.

DISCUSSION:

- According to v 18 what is God's longing or desire?
- Reflect on how precious and undeserved God's grace towards us is. Spend some time praising Him for His unending lovingkindness.
- What other promise does v 20-21 give to us?
- How cool is the promise that God will guide us saying "This is the way, walk in it." Share a testimony with someone of a time in your life when God personally guided you.
- V 22 emphasizes the removal of false gods and idols from one's life. The idea of "defiling" them meant to so destroy and mutilate them that you could never go back to them again. Are there any "impure" things that you need to remove permanently from your life?
- If the people would repent and return to obeying the LORD, what blessings are promised in v 23-26?

APPLICATION:

The first verse of chapter 31 reiterates what God told His people in chapter 30.

1 Woe to those who 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 do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!

Then v 3 states the obvious:

3 Now the Egyptians are men and not God, And their horses are flesh and not spirit; So the LORD will stretch out His hand, And he who helps will stumble And he who is helped will fall, And all of them will come to an end together.

- Isaiah 36-37 tells the "rest of the story" of God's miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem: Hezekiah listened, Isaiah prayed, and a single angel killed 185,000 soldiers in one night!!! God's got unlimited power at His command!
- We need to remember that "our battle is not with flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (See Ephesians 6:10-17 about putting on the "full armor of God.")
- Zechariah 4:6 reminds us that victory comes "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD Almighty.

Who are you trusting for strength?

- Do you seek the Lord's wisdom in all situations or are you trying to work it out on your own or seeking to do it the way of the world?
- Return to the Lord. Trust Him for wisdom and strength. Don't lose your faith in Him. Obey what you know to do and study His Word to find out what you don't know.
- God's ways work! Every other way will eventually fail. **TRUST GOD!!!**