

# Isaiah 30-33 • In quietness and in trust shall be your strength

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Isaiah chapter 30 is where we're going to be picking it up tonight and so we're going to begin with prayer.

Father, we thank you so much for giving us your Word and you know, these are some tough chapters to go through, but we pray that you would help us and give us a heart of understanding.

Grant us, Lord God, to not just get what is being said here in these chapters, Lord, but also to think about how we can apply them and what they teach us, Lord, about you, about your character, your heart. We pray that you would give us wisdom and insight. We pray, Lord, for a heart of understanding. We ask it in Jesus name, amen.

It's fitting that we should begin the study of Isaiah each and every time, asking for a heart of understanding because that's exactly what Isaiah was saying to the people of Judah. And we're going to see that here tonight, is that they refused to have a heart of understanding as it relates to hearing the Word of God and responding to that Word in a way that would take serious what God was saying.

And not only that, but as we get into chapter 30 here, we're going to see the Lord also confronting the people of Judah and I'm going to use the word Israel and Judah interchangeably, okay. But remember something, Isaiah's prophecies are given to the southern kingdom of Judah, but they're Israelites, right?

They're still Israelites, but they're living in the southern kingdom of Judah and not the northern kingdom of Israel. But these are the people that that Isaiah was called to prophesy to and I want to remind you, too, that the nation that was causing fear in everyone's heart at this time was the nation of Assyria.

And Assyria was going around conquering everybody and everybody was afraid, and everybody was trying to figure out what they were going to do to be able to stand against Assyria and that included the people in the southern kingdom of Judah. And what they were doing, and they'd gotten so far away from the Lord by this time, that many people were saying, we need to have an

ally. And instead of turning to the Lord as their ally, they would say, we need to go to Egypt.

Egypt was considered to be a fairly strong nation, so we need to... Tell you what, let's get some camels and donkeys and we'll load them up with gold and silver and we'll send some envoys to Egypt and we'll kind of butter up Pharaoh a little bit and get him kind of all feeling good about things. And we'll tell him hey, we'll pay you a whole bundle of money if you'll just come stand against the Assyrian threat with us. Because I believe, this is what they were saying, I believe that if you do that, we have a fighting chance against the Assyrians.

If we come together, in kind of a connected, united approach, against this possible Assyrian invasion, we can do this thing and God's like, what about me? Are you putting your trust in man before you're putting your trust in me?

Look what He begins to say here as He opens up chapter 30. Through the prophet Isaiah, He says, *"Ah, stubborn children," declares the Lord, "who carry out a plan, but (its) not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; <sup>2</sup> who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!" (ESV)*

I want to remind you as we pause there for just a moment, that Egypt for us in the scripture presents a metaphorical picture, if you will, of the world. And when we see Israel back during the time of Moses being delivered from their bondage in Egypt, that's a picture of the believer being delivered from their bondage and slavery to the world. Being brought out and delivered and baptized through the Red Sea and taught in the wilderness and then finally entering into the promises of God that we see as the nation of Israel finally goes into the promised land.

So this picture of Egypt is a picture of what it is to come out of the world and yet, what are the people of God doing now? They're going back to the world, seeking solace and protection and guidance and wisdom from the world. And so this is a picture of believers turning away from God and turning to the world, which they've been delivered from, right?

And we believers, we like to say that we have a new King and we are under the King and His name is Jesus. But then when hard times crop up, we sometimes run right to the world, we go to the world for answers, we go to the world for comfort. You remember what Jesus said in John 18? Let me put this on the screen for you.

### **John 18:36a (ESV)**

*Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world."*

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Again, we like to say we have a King and we're part of a different kingdom. Well, guess what? Jesus made it very clear, His kingdom is not of this world. It has nothing to do with this world and so if we're going to put our trust in the King, we know that it's going to be otherworldly. We know that the wisdom that we get is going to be otherworldly, meaning, other than the world would give.

The comfort that we receive, the peace that we get is going to be otherworldly. Jesus said, my peace, I give you not as the world gives. (John 14:27) How does the world give peace? Well, using physical, what we consider to be rational things like, well, I know what's going to give us peace. We'll create an alliance with Egypt and then boy, when we got the strength of Egypt behind us, we're going to be able to sleep well at night, let me tell you right now, we're going to sleep in peace. Well, that's the kind of peace the world gives. It's peace based on circumstances that I kind of create for myself and then trust in.

The problem is, it's very short lived, it could be broken in a moment. Jesus says, I give you peace, but not as the world gives. What is His peace like? Well, it goes on, it can't be shaken. When we put our trust in the Lord, it can't be shaken. As far as His power, His ability, doesn't mean we can't be shaken, we can. But I'm saying, His power and what we trust in cannot be shaken and so forth because it's Him and there's no power above Him.

So He's now confronting, the nation of Judah, the kingdom of Judah about their desire to create this alliance with Egypt. He says in verse 3, *"Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation."* It's only going to result in shame and humiliation.

He says, verse 4, *"For though his officials are at Zoan and his envoys reach Hanes,"* In other words, he covers a pretty broad area. *"<sup>5</sup> everyone comes to shame through a people that cannot profit them, that brings neither help nor profit, but shame and disgrace."* And now He's going to speak about those caravans of camels and beasts of burden that are on their way to Egypt to butter up Pharaoh, to pay him off, to hire them as an alliance.

Look what He says in verse 6, *"An oracle on the beasts of the Negeb. (this is the caravan taking things to Egypt) Through a land of trouble and anguish, from where come the lioness and the lion, the adder and the flying*

*fiery serpent, they carry their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels, to a people that cannot profit them.”*

And so He says in verse 7, *“Egypt’s help is worthless and empty; therefore I have called her ‘Rahab who sits still.’”* In other words, Rahab who will do you no good, Rahab who will not get off the dime to lift one finger to help you. You’re going to take all this money and all this riches and all this wealth over to Egypt and it’s not going to, it’s not going to help you at all.

Now, check out verse 8, *“And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.”* Now, I want you to stop there for just a moment, I want to tell you what God is telling Isaiah to do here. He’s telling him to go write these prophecies down.

He gave him these prophecies to give to the people of Judah, but they weren’t listening. So He says, I want you to write this down, that it might be for a time to come, and later on it’s going to be a witness.

In other words, there’s going to be a generation that’s going to come forth later, and they’re going to read of these things, and they’re going to know what happened. They’re going to know that Egypt did not serve Judah’s purposes, they did not bring any protection, they did not create an alliance against the Assyrian invasion threat and they were absolutely no help at all.

The people who are living right now, they’re not listening to me, but there’s going to come a generation and they’re going to listen. So Isaiah, I want you to write it down, I want you to write it down. And He begins to talk about these people who are living now.

He says, *“<sup>9</sup> For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the LORD; <sup>10</sup> who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ and to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, (in other words, easy things) prophesy illusions, <sup>11</sup> leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.’”* That’s the attitude of the people of Judah right now.

We don’t want to hear anything more from this, from the God of Israel, the Holy One of Israel, just tell us what we want to hear. The Bible tells us that’ll be the attitude in the last days among people as well. They’ll turn from the truth, they’ll turn from the hardness, the difficulty of the truth and instead, they will gather around themselves teachers that’ll tell them what they want to hear. And we are seeing that a lot today.

Verse 12, *“Therefore (here's God's response) thus says the Holy One of Israel, “Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on them, <sup>13</sup> therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant;”*” Now, you and I, we don't put walls around our cities like they did back then, because that was a form of protection. We have walls on our homes, obviously, but a walled city was a thing of protection, it was what they use to protect themselves from the enemy.

And He says that, your inability to hear the Word, in fact, your heart and your attitude to despise the Word will be to you like a breach in the wall. In other words, the enemy is going to be able to get in because you despise my Word. And the enemy in their case was Assyria, but do you know, Christians, that this is still true of us in our Christian lives?

When we get to that point and Christians can do this, Christians can despise God's Word as it relates to certain aspects or areas. Christians can do that and when that happens, we create a breach in the wall and the enemy can attack. Paul wrote and said, don't give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:27) A foothold is the ability to scale the wall and get into our lives and create all kinds of havoc. He says, don't do that, don't give the enemy a foothold.

Well, what gives him a foothold? When we're not listening, when we're not responding? I got a letter from a young man who was all upset about a marriage that was about to take place in his family. He says, his sister was getting married and he says our family is all Christian, but his, father was concerned that his sister was, never going to get married or something so he found her a man to marry. But the problem is, he compromised and found someone who was not a believer.

And I wrote to the young man, I said, well, is your father a believer? He said, oh yeah. I was like, why is he telling your sister to do what is in direct violation to the Word of God as it relates to being unequally yoked with an unbeliever? Well, there are times we just despise the Word of God and we create all kinds of difficulty when we turn a blind eye to the importance of some aspect of God's Word. So He says it's going to be like a breach in the wall.

Verse 14, *“and its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a shard is found with which to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.”* They would actually use pieces of broken pottery, large pieces, to scoop burning coals out of the hearth and take them somewhere, wherever they needed to take them. They kind of used them as tools, or they could even take a portion of a large pottery,

something or other and if one, even when it's broken, it can be used to dip water out of a cistern.

But God is saying that the devastation that is going to be coming is going to be so complete, so total, that it will be like a potter's vessel that is smashed so much that there isn't even a large piece to be found. It just speaks of a total devastation.

Verse 15, *"For thus said the LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But you were unwilling, <sup>16</sup> and you said, "No! We will flee upon horses"; therefore you shall flee away; and, "We will ride upon swift steeds"; therefore your pursuers shall be swift. <sup>17</sup> A thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill."*

This is a sad thing that God is saying to the people of Judah, because one of the promises He gave them in the Mosaic law was that if they worshiped Him and Him alone, and were true to their devotion to Him, that their enemies would not be able to stand. And one of the things God said was, He basically turned this thing around and He said at the threat of one of you, a thousand shall flee, but now it's flip flopped on them. At the threat of one of their enemies, a thousand of them shall flee and at the threat of just five of their enemies, the whole nation will flee.

Now, as we get into verse 18 here, God now begins to speak of that later generation who He told Isaiah to write all this stuff down for, who would heed the Word. I want you to hear and see what the Lord says about this group. He says, *"Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you,..."* He's waiting for that generation to come who is going to listen. *"...the LORD waits to be gracious to you and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him."*

<sup>19</sup> *For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. <sup>20</sup> And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, (in other words, though difficult times may come) yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. <sup>21</sup> And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."*

And He goes on to say, “<sup>22</sup> Then (in other words, at that time) you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “Be gone!” <sup>23</sup> And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous.

*In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures, <sup>24</sup> and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. <sup>25</sup> And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.*

<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the LORD binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.” In other words, the glory of the Lord.

He's talking about the glory of the Lord that will be as if the light of the sun is sevenfold. And in these final verses of the chapter, the Lord speaks of the impending defeat of the Assyrian army which will come by His own hand and not by the hand of any human means.

Verse 27, “Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire; <sup>28</sup> his breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction, and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray.

<sup>29</sup> You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. <sup>30</sup> And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones.

<sup>31</sup> The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the LORD, when he strikes with his rod. <sup>32</sup> And every stroke of the appointed staff that the LORD lays on them will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres. Battling with brandished arm, he will fight with them. <sup>33</sup> For a burning place has long been prepared; indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, (a pyre, you might know, is a heap of combustible wood that is used to burn. They even called them funeral pyres at times. It was used for burning bodies and so forth. He says,) with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of

*the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.*” So the Lord promises His retribution upon their enemies.

Chapter 31, as we look at this chapter, it's relatively short and in this chapter, Isaiah repeats the warning that he gave in the previous chapter concerning the creation of an alliance with Egypt and trusting in that nation for deliverance.

And this time, God says, *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!”* You could take that one verse and you could paraphrase it for a Christian today and say, woe are those who go to the world for help, who rely on all the things that man considers to be a strength, but do not look to their God. It's the same thing, it's the same exact idea.

Verse 2, *“And yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.”*<sup>3</sup> *The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together.”*

When He says, *the helper will stumble*, He's saying those of you who are called upon or wanted to call upon Egypt for help, you're going to find that even he is going to stumble. *“<sup>4</sup> For thus the Lord said to me, “As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill.*

*<sup>5</sup> Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it; he will spare and rescue it.”*” God is saying He's able to protect His people from the Assyrian threat.

Verse 6, *“Turn to him from whom people have deeply revolted, O children of Israel.”*<sup>7</sup> *For in that day everyone shall cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you.”* I want to stop there. That's an important verse, very important verse, verse 7. It's basically saying here that when the day of the Lord's deliverance takes place, that the people of Judah will then cast away their idols, they'll get rid of them.

And what it's saying to you and I is, when there is a deliverance in our lives from the Lord, and we see this in people's lives, they go through a really



difficult situation or they face a very challenging event in their lives. And God supernaturally just delivers them and what we find is that people are motivated then to turn away from the things that they trusted in previously. And that's what this passage is saying, that's what this verse is saying.

When God responds in our lives with an act of deliverance, it ought to inspire repentance, which is turning around and going the other way. And this turning from the old ways should be seen chiefly in turning from those false gods and you notice that's what He says here in verse 7 they're going to do. They're going to cast away their idols of silver and gold. Well, what's that a picture of for you and I? It's a picture of the things that we turn to apart from God and it could be anything.

It literally could be anything that we turn to and it might even be something that we turn to that in and of itself isn't all that bad. What's bad is that we turn to it and not turn to the Lord, you see. People will sometimes say, well, what's wrong with doing such and such, it's what's so bad about that? Well, nothing, there's nothing maybe bad about that. The question is, have you turned to that to get answers, to get help, to get comfort and not to God? I mean it could be something very simple.

Verse 8 goes on and says, *“And the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of man; (check that out, that's where God says, they're going to fall, but they're not going to fall by man's sword) and a sword, not of man, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor.”* So God promises that the Assyrians will be destroyed, but not by human warfare, it will come about as a divine act that God Himself will perform for Israel on their behalf.

And He ends this short chapter by saying, *“<sup>9</sup> His rock shall pass away in terror...”* And the rock is always a picture of strength something you stand on, that is secure, but He says *“<sup>9</sup> His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,”* The standard was a was usually a, oh think of it like a flag but it often wasn't a flag, but it was something on a pole that symbolized that nation.

You know how you got pictures sometimes of the Civil War where they're carrying different flags, the flag of the North and the flag of the South. Well, that was similar to the standards they would carry and it was a prideful way of just saying that we're representing our country.

And notice what God says, that the “<sup>9</sup> ...officers (will) desert the standard in panic,” declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.”

Chapter 32, the first 5 verses of this chapter prophetically describe the millennial reign of Christ because you're going to be talking here about a King that'll reign in righteousness. You'll see that Isaiah writes about such a King and we know that is Jesus. And in fact we're going to see different parts of this chapter that will speak of God's restoration of Israel, which of course will take place during the Millennial Kingdom, but it is pictured elsewhere throughout the history of Israel.

He says in verse 1, “Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice. <sup>2</sup> Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.” That's what the king's righteousness and his princes will be like.

“<sup>3</sup> Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention. <sup>4</sup> The heart of the hasty will understand and know, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly. <sup>5</sup> The fool will no more be called noble, nor the scoundrel said to be honorable.”

And then verses 6 through 8, you'll notice, sound very much like a parable, or what we would read in the parables. “For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink. <sup>7</sup> As for the scoundrel—his devices are evil; he plans wicked schemes to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right. <sup>8</sup> But he who is noble plans noble things, and on noble things he stands.”

And then God gives this word to the women of Judah. Notice what He says to them, “<sup>9</sup> Rise up, you women who are at ease, (in other words who right now are, you feel like things are going well) hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech.” Can you imagine Isaiah saying this to the women walking through the streets of Jerusalem? Maybe even shouting this out to the women as they're working in the area or doing whatever they do.

He says in verse 10, “In little more than a year you will shudder, you complacent women; for the grape harvest fails, the fruit harvest will not come. <sup>11</sup> Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones; strip, and make yourselves bare, and tie sackcloth around your waist.

*<sup>12</sup> Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine, <sup>13</sup> for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers, yes, for all the joyous houses in the exultant city. <sup>14</sup> For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks;”*

He's speaking now prophetically of what Israel is going to look like after the people are carried off into exile and this is at a later date. But notice He says here that all this is going to happen and then verse 15, notice how it changes the tone of the scripture, *“until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, ...”* Wow, what a change of tone. So all these things are going to be this way until the Spirit of God is poured out upon us. Then what's going to happen?

*“<sup>15</sup> ...and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. <sup>16</sup> Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. <sup>17</sup> And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. <sup>18</sup> My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. <sup>19</sup> And it will hail when the forest falls down, and the city will be utterly laid low. <sup>20</sup> Happy are you who sow beside all waters, who let the feet of the ox and the donkey range free.”* Those last 2 verses are kind of challenging.

I actually like the rendering, in this case, better in the NIV, which says, *“Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, <sup>20</sup> how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.”* I think that has a better sense of what is actually being said in that passage.

Chapter 33. This is the last chapter we're going to deal with this evening, and the Lord is going to say some interesting things here. But He begins by saying, *“Ah, you destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed, you traitor, whom none has betrayed! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have finished betraying, they will betray you.”* He's talking there most likely about the judgment that will then come upon Assyria.

And then in verses 2 through 4, we find an interesting prayer for Israel or maybe we should even say a prayer of Israel because it says, *“O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble. <sup>3</sup> At the tumultuous noise peoples flee; when you lift yourself up, nations are scattered, <sup>4</sup> and your spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathers; as locusts leap, it is leapt upon.”* And that means, when God moves and so forth, God's people will pounce upon the spoil of their enemies.

*“<sup>5</sup> The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, <sup>6</sup> and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.”* And I will add that the fear of the Lord is any nation's treasure. In fact, the fear of the Lord is any person's treasure.

Isn't that a great verse? Verses 5 and 6. Can we read those again? This is great. I just, I mean, this is something you should probably have highlighted in your Bible, this is a good thing to read every morning maybe. Put it up on your mirror, read it while you're getting ready in the morning.

*“<sup>5</sup> The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, <sup>6</sup> and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, (that means abundance of deliverance) wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.”* Boy, what a great couple of verses, the stability of your times.

We've recently gone through a time of instability, haven't we? The whole world has been shaken, the whole world. God's Word says that the Lord will be the stability of your season, of your times. Whatever the times may be, whatever they may be. Time of shaking? God is our stability. Time of difficulty? He is our peace and comfort. Time of stress? He's a rest.

Now, verses 7, 8 and 9 speak of a time when Hezekiah sent a peace envoy to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria and Hezekiah was told to, at the time, to pay a fine of silver and gold. But ultimately it didn't make any difference because the Assyrians ended up marching on Judah anyway. And they pretty much, you got to understand, the Assyrians actually devastated most of Judah. They couldn't get into Jerusalem, they couldn't get into the capital city, but they decimated pretty much the rest of the country. So, Hezekiah was told to pay silver and gold to the king of Assyria, but it didn't help.

Verse 7 says, *“Behold, their heroes cry in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly.”* Why? Because it didn't work, it didn't take. They went as envoys of peace to the Assyrians, but the Assyrians didn't care, they attacked anyways.

*“<sup>8</sup> The highways lie waste; the traveler ceases. ...”* Boy, do we know what that's all about? The highways lying in waste and the traveler ceases? Anybody who works for the airline industry knows what that's all about.

*“<sup>8</sup> ...Covenants are broken; cities are despised; there is no regard for man.  
<sup>9</sup> The land mourns and languishes; Lebanon (known for its incredibly big trees)*

*is confounded and withers away; Sharon (which is a fruitful area, lush, He says) is like a desert, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.*” So, they're being told here that the Syrian invasion and all the accompanying destruction would have an effect not only on Judah, but on even the surrounding areas as well, leaving them desolate.

But here in verses 10 through 12, I want you to notice that God promises to act on behalf of His people. He says, *“Now I will arise,” says the LORD, “now I will lift myself up; now I will be exalted.* <sup>11</sup> *You conceive chaff; you give birth to stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you.* <sup>12</sup> *And the peoples will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.”*” And the reference to the burning of lime and the burning of thorns speaks of the fiery judgment of the Lord. And in fact, it being very complete and God promises here an overwhelming judgment to be finally visited upon Assyria.

And now He calls upon His people to take note of these things. He says, *“<sup>13</sup> Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge my might.*” Now, far off and near doesn't refer to miles, geographically. It's talking about those who are far away from the Lord relationally. So He says, even those of you who know that you've fallen away from God, listen anyway, hear. And those of you who are near, who are holding close and waiting on the Lord, acknowledge my strength He says.

*“<sup>14</sup> The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” <sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, <sup>16</sup> he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.”*

So you see how these verses are saying that the sinner is asking the question, who can stand with all this stuff going on? And God answers, He says, I'll tell you who can stand, the one who's devoted to me, the one who follows my Word, he'll be taken care of.

*“Your eyes (verse 17) will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar. <sup>18</sup> Your heart will muse on the terror: “Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed the tribute? Where is he who counted the towers?””*” In other words, God is promising here that the devastation of the foreign armies and the misery of counting out the tribute paid to those foreign armies is going to be a thing of the past for the people of God who trust.

The people who don't trust, they have to deal with the constant issues of, what we got to pay the king of Assyria, so, okay, let's get the money together because he's going to want his silver and gold. And God is saying, for those who trust, they're going to ask the question, where is he who counted out the tribute again? We don't have to deal with that, because we've put our trust in God.

Verse 19, *"You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand."* These godly people are not going to see the enemy any longer.

*"<sup>20</sup> Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, (that hasn't come about yet, has it? Jerusalem is not yet an untroubled habitation but one day it will be) an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up,..."* Get that? Its stakes will never be plucked up. Do you know what happens every time some president decides he's going to get peace in Israel. What do they do?

Well, we need to give more land away, right? Isn't that what they do? Land for peace and the Israelis stop and they say, no, we're not going to give up land. And they're absolutely right, it's stupid, it doesn't work anyway. But the point is, God says there's coming a time when their stakes will never be plucked up. In other words, nobody's going to infringe on what God has given them.

*"<sup>20</sup> ...nor will any of its cords be broken. <sup>21</sup> But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass. <sup>22</sup> For the LORD is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us."* He will deliver us.

Verse 23 is a challenging verse. Bible scholars don't know if it refers to Judah or Assyria. Most think Assyria, but it's interesting because then in the latter part of verse 23, it seems to change. You'll see as I go through here. *"Your cords hang loose; they cannot hold the mast firm in its place or keep the sail spread out. Then prey and spoil in abundance will be divided; even the lame will take the prey. <sup>24</sup> And no inhabitant will say, "I am sick"; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity."*

And so God is again, prophesying about a time. And again, this speaks of the Millennial Kingdom, when the Lord shall rule and reign from Jerusalem and the inhabitants will be greatly blessed thereof.

That's where we're going to stop for tonight and we will pick it up in chapter 34 next time. So let's pray.