

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 • Read Isaiah 30

Questions from the Scripture text: Upon whom is the fourth woe pronounced (v1a)? What do they do in v1b-c? What is wrong with this consulting and planning (cf. v2b)? Why does this happen (v1d)? In whom do they trust instead (v2)? How will this turn out for them (v3)? What can't be found even from the northernmost to southernmost parts of Egypt (v4-5)? What will be found instead (v5c)? What weight will fall upon whom in v6? But what will they have to show for their poor beasts' efforts (v7)? What will Egypt's new nickname be (v7c)? What word does YHWH now send to those who failed to ask for one (v8-9)? In fact, what have they actually done to the Lord's Word (v10-11)? What are they actually trusting in, instead, when they do this (v12)? What will the Lord do to their efforts (v13-14)? What had the Lord YHWH offered them (v15)? And what had they said that they would do instead (v16)? So, what is He making the outcome of their plan to be (v17)? To what end is He bringing this disaster upon them (v18)? To Whom will He force them to turn? What will He do for them when this happens (v19)? And what will He restore to them (v20)? How close will the words of the true prophets be (v21a)? How practical the application (v21b)? How continually (v21c-d)? What will they do with their former hope and delight (v22)? What will the Lord do for them at that point (v23)? And what else will enjoy the difference (v24, cf. v6)? What will He provide (v25)? How does v26 communicate the supernatural/new-creation nature of this provision? But what approaches in v27a? And what will this be like for the nations (v27-28)? What will YHWH give to His people in that day (v29)? What comes near/is heard in v30a? But what will this music and singing be like for those who are the Lord's enemies (v30-33)? When was this role for Tophet/Hell purposed (v33a)? What is it like (v33)?

How does the Lord show mercy to those who prefer human wisdom to God's authoritative Word? Isaiah 30 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these thirty-three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **if men prefer their own wisdom to God's Word, it is a mercy when God visits their plans with devastating failure.**

Rebellious children. The fourth woe addresses those who take counsel (v1b), devise plans (v1c), and take advice. The problem is that it isn't God's counsel, God's plan, or God's advice (v2b). Thus they are called "rebellious children" (v1a, v9). Since they refuse God's Word *to* them, they will hear God's Word *about* them (v8).

Rejecting God's authoritative Word (v10a-b) is the hallmark of the rebellious (v9a). It's not that they don't want preaching at all. Rather, they refuse to hear YHWH's law (v9c); they accumulate for themselves preachers of smooth things (v10c; cf. 2Tim 4:3-4).

But to despise God's Word is not merely to have a flaw in our preferences; it is to despise God Himself (v11). It is to give oneself to perversity (v12)! God offers them rest, quietness, and confidence in turning to Him (v15a-c), but they reject Him Himself in rejecting His Word.

Merciful devastation. In this case, the smooth and deceitful words told them that the Assyrian threat could be turned away by the help of Egypt (v2). But God is going to turn their hope into their shame (v3). From Zoan in the north to Hanes in the south (v4), not only would there be no benefit (v5a-b), but there would be positive failure and humiliation (v5c).

The poor beasts in v6 would bear the treasure of Israel back to Egypt through the wilderness (same word as "South"), obtaining nothing in return. They unwittingly reverse the sudoxE, and their hope (Egypt) gets a new nickname. Rahab has been a nickname for Egypt, but now it gets expanded to "Rahab the Do-Nothing" (v7).

How completely will the Lord shatter them (v13)? Such that there won't be a peace left large enough to carry any water (v14). Since they have rejected having God Himself as their help (v15) in favor of a plan that depends on their initiative, the Lord's judgment will match and exceed their vigor (v16), until they are utterly devastated (v17).

Why would the Lord do this? He is patiently (v18a) bringing them to the point where they have nothing but the Lord's glory and mercy (v18b). Let the believer remember that the kindness of God often comes in the painful, afflicting stroke (cf. Heb 12:6-11).

Subduing mercy. As the Lord wipes the tears from their eyes (v19), they are glad. More than that, it was precisely through affliction (v20a-b) that they are glad, now, to hear His Word (v20c-d). And the Word that they now receive is given to them abundantly. The Word comes near them (v21a). The Word addresses, practically, the very part of their life in which they find themselves (v21b). The Word persists with them at all times and places (v21c-d).

Not only do they receive the Word, but the Lord gives them to respond to it. They reject their old idols (v22). The mercy of God does not leave His people unchanged. Rather than giving them what they want, His mercy transforms them into those who hate what they used to love and love what they used to hate.

Ultimate mercy. The blessing that their own ideas utterly failed to give them, the Lord Himself will now give (v23a-d). Even beasts, that had fared so poorly in v6, are now blessed richly in v23e-24. We've already seen this as an indication of ultimate mercy (cf. 11:6-9). This becomes clear in v25-26, especially with the brightness of the place. This wiping away of tears, and supernatural provision of water, and brightness that far exceeds the sun is hearkened to in Rev 21:3-6, 22:1-5. The same mercy that brings us to repentance has its ultimate end as the mercy that we will enjoy in perfect blessedness forever.

Ultimate judgment. Finally, Assyria (v31) will come under the very judgment of Hell (v27-33). The song of Israel's blessing (v29) will correspond to the song of YHWH's punishing Assyria (v32). Whereas Egypt was not so great as to be the help they had imagined, Assyria is not so great a threat as they had imagined. They should not fear them who can only kill the body. The Lord, after killing the body, righteously casts the wicked soul into Hell (cf. Mat 10:28; Lk 12:5): the indignation of His anger, the flame of devouring fire (v30). Tophet's (the fire in the valley of Hinnom/Gehenna) pyre is fire with much wood (v33a-c)—the breath of YHWH kindling it like a stream of brimstone (v33d-f). God's people and God's enemies both get the same thing in the end: God Himself. For His people, God is their blessed delight. For His enemies, God is their burning destruction.

From where does the desire to hear only smooth/easy preaching come? What devastating failure or painful affliction have you had in your life? If you are a believer, what was it accomplishing? How has mercy subdued your resistance to God's Word? What else does such mercy give you, beside repentance? If God is not your blessed delight forever, then what will you experience forever?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for Your authoritative Word. Forgive us for how we have sometimes rejected it, even preferring our own plans to Your perfect precepts. We have been blind to how rejecting Your authoritative Word is really a rejection of You. Save us from our sin, bring us through affliction, wipe the tears from our eyes, and make Yourself our hope and our joy in Christ, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH51C "God, Be Merciful to Me"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 30. These are God's words. Whoa to the rebellious childrens as yahoo who take council, but not of me. And to devise plans, but not of my spirit. That they may add sin to send. Who walked to go down to egypt and have not asked my advice. To strengthen themselves and the strength of pharaoh.

And to trust in the shadow. Of egypt. Therefore, the strength of pharaoh shall be your shame. Then trust in the shadow of egypt. She'll be your humiliation. For his princes were. So in and his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of the people. Who could not benefit them or be helped or benefit but a shame And also approach.

The burden against the beasts of the south. Through a land of trouble and anguish. From which came to from which came the lioness and lion. The viper and fiery flying serpent. They will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys and their treasures. On the humps of camels.

To a people who shall not profit. For the egyptians show up in vain into no purpose. Therefore, i have called her. Rahab him shabbath. Now, go write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll that it may be for time to come. Forever and ever that this is a rebellious people lying.

Children children. Who will not hear the law of yahweh. Who say to the seers do not see into the prophets. Do not prophesy to us, right? Things speak to us smooth things. Prophesied deceits. Get out of the way. Turn aside from the path. Cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

Therefore, thus says The holy one of Israel. Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perversity and rely on them. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach, ready to fall a bulge in a high wall. Who's breaking comes suddenly in an instant. And he saw break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel.

Which is broken in pieces. He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments a shard. To take fire from the hearth, or to take water from the cistern. For us says the lord. You always the holy one of israel. In returning. And rest. You shall be saved and quietness.

And confidence. She'll be your strength. But you would not, you said no, for we will flee on horses. Therefore you shall flee. Then we will ride on swift ones. For those who pursue, you shall be swift. One thousand roughly at the threat of one. That the threat of five uselessly.

Until you are left as a poll on top of a mountain. And there's a banner on a hill. Therefore you always will wait. That he may be gracious to you. And therefore, he will be exalted that he may have mercy. On you. For you, always a god of justice, blessed are all those who wait for him.

For the people shall dwell in Zion at jerusalem. You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you. That the sound of your cry when he hears it. He will answer you. Don't know. The lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore.

Put your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word. Behind you saying, this is the way walking it Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left, You will also defile the covering of your images of silver and the ornament of your molded images of gold.

You will throw them away as an unclean thing, you will say to them, get away. Then he will give you the rain for your seed. With what you sew the ground and the bread of increase on the earth, it will be fat and plentiful. And that day, your cattle will feed in large pastures.

Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground. We'll eat cured fodder. Which has been winnowed with the shovel fan. There will be on every high mountain and on every high hill, rivers, and streams of waters. And the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun and the light of the sun will be seven fold as the light of seven days. In the day that yahweh binds up the bruise. Of his people. And here's the stroke of their wound. Behold the name of yahweh comes from afar.

Burning. With his anger and his burden is heavy. His lips are full of indignation, his tongue like a devouring fire. His breath, like an overflowing stream, which reaches up to the neck to sift the nation's, with the sieve of utility. And there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err.

You shall have a song. As in the night when a holy festival is kept and gladness of heart, As when one goes with a flute. To come into the mountain of your way. To the mighty one of israel, y all i will cause his glorious voice to be heard.

And, Show the descent of his arm. With the indignation of his anger. And the flame of a devouring fire. With scattering tempest. And hailstones. For through the voice of yahweh, Assyria will be beaten down. As he strikes with the rod. And in every place where the staff of punishment passes which Yahweh lays on him, it will be with tambourines and harps.

And in battles of brandishing, you will fight with it. For tuffet. Was established of old. Yes, for the king. It is prepared. He has made it deep and large. It's par as fire. With much wood, the breath of Yahweh. Like a stream of brimstone. Candles it.

And then, that sends us reading of god's inspired and Inherent word. This reminds us again all the way back to Chapter 7, chapter 8. With the lord offering ahas. By his own word. And by a sign which is word commanded A has to Uh, to select. That the lord would offer to as to be.

His salvation and his comfort. In that particular case, Uh, it was against Syria and the northern kingdom. And ahaz was hoping that. Us area, togalith, believer. Would come to his rescue. This is now looking forward to judah. And, Uh, judah hoping that egypt will save them from Assyria. And, Instead of from Syria, and Ephraim.

This time around. But again, There is the word of the lord. And the word of the lord, in this case, especially comes With command to repent from their. Idolatry, not only do they. Not wants to repent of their. Silver and gold idols that we hear about later in the chapter.

But they want to hope not in being quiet. And trusting in the lord. They want to hope and their action plan. To make an alliance with egypt and have swift horses. And The things that seem good to them. But this setting aside god's word, which says to rest in him.

In favor of their. Ideas. Their plans. Their action. This, the lord identifies as being rebellious. Children. He calls them children, lying children children, who will not hear Now, this is difficult for us in our culture to understand. And because we have actually lost that which most cultures in the history of the world even after the fall.

Have understood and that is That the primary job of a child is to listen. A child is not to come up. With their own ideas of the best way to live life. A child is given parents. Who are wiser and bigger and therefore can enforce their wisdom. But when we want our parents, To tell us smooth things instead of The difficult truths or the Maybe difficult isn't the right word.

Truths that we find unpleasant. Then we are rebellious children and then when god comes with his word, And we decide that his word is unpleasant to us. And our plans are a better idea. We are rebellious. Children and so here's a woe. Upon rebellious children. Because, When they? Or we, Do not want to.

Hear the right things. Verse 10 do not prophesy to us, write things. But we would rather hear the smooth things. Verse 10 speak to us smooth things. What we are really asking. Is for the holy one of israel. To be put away from our sight.

So verse 11. Speaking to their teachers, get out of the way, turn aside from the path cause the holy one of israel to cease from before us. We don't want. To see God. And since god makes himself known to them through their prophets and their teachers. I don't want to see them either.

Not unless they are going to stand for themselves and their own ideas. Rather than The right things that the lord gives them to say. Now. When the lord grants repentance later. Part of the repentance. He gives them is. Your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers.

Verse 20. So rejecting God's word is rejecting god himself. This is one of the reasons why

If the lord. Gives. A congregation or an individual. Someone who opens the scripture faithfully. It is a very serious thing. To resist out of a desire to hear things. That

are more according to our preferences. Rebellious children. Well in this case, the lord is going to show mercy. Uh, to some of his rebellious children and he's going to show mercy.

By devastating them, the very things that they think. Are going to help them the very things that they think are right according to their own ideas. And their own plans. The lord is going to cause to fail. Miserably. Instead of help and shadow. Egypt is going to be to them.

Shame And reproach. From zoan in the north. To Haines in the south. You know, the picture is Of the princess of judah going throughout the land and not finding anybody who can actually help. In fact. Uh, the failure is going to be so great that Uh, whereas in israel they had A nickname for egypt rahav.

Uh, The lord is going to give them. Give egypt a new nickname for seven. Therefore, i have called her. Rehab him. Him shareth. Which means? Rehab, the do nothing. Is her new nickname? And the lord even pities their beasts. Because israel can't see. That they are. Uh, playing the exodus in reverse.

And so verse six, where it says, the burden against the beasts of the south, you should know south is negative. And also means wilderness and Burden here is just the word weight. Sounds like burden, but sometimes used. In terms of a difficult prophecy. And verse 6, it's saying, look at the The weight that is on their beasts in the wilderness.

And they trace the path back through the dangerous wilderness. Carrying their treasures to egypt, which they hand over, and get nothing in return. Is exactly the opposite of the exodus. You remember? They had taken the treasures of egypt. And given nothing in return and, and Uh, carried them. To the promised land.

Uh, but here again this devastation The animals. To pay the price with their masters. Just as in the restoration later in the chapter, You have the, the cattle, feeding and large pastures, and oxen and young donkeys eating cured fodder. Yeah, they Idea in verse 24 is their beasts are going to have executive chefs in the new creation.

Is the is the image there. But it's merciful of god. To devastate. The ideas of his people that are not from his work. So that he will turn them to himself and repentance. It's marvelous verse 18. Therefore y'all way will wait. And, Verse 18 is a response to their Folly.

They're rebellion. Their treachery. But he is waiting that he may be gracious to you. He is carrying out a long-term plan. Of afflicting, his people to bring them to repentance. When we come up with our own ideas and god lets us Uh, feel like they are working. That is judgment.

That's the wrath of romans one. That we do the things and we approve of those who do and you flip the page into Romans too. And the judgment of god. The wrath of god hasn't fallen in final fullness and the people think they're getting away with it and continue in their sin.

Rather than the kindness and patience of god, leading them to repentance. So, that's wrath mercy. Yes, we got actually makes your sin. To fail in devastating fashion. So that you turn to him before the day of breath comes. So that he humiliates, Your sin. Then your willfulness. And so yahweh, in verse 18 is waiting to be gracious.

He is bringing the people. Very similarly. The psalm 2. Where he threatens to shatter. And says, You better trust in him before, the day of wrath comes and here. He doesn't just threaten to shatter. He gives a shattering in time. He gives the destruction. Of their hopes to such an extent that if the hope was a potter's vessel.

It's smashed into such small pieces. There isn't one big enough to get a coal onto to to carry from the fire anymore. But it's this very thing that he uses, To bring them to cry to him. He will be very gracious to you verse 19 at the sound of your cry.

When he hears it, he will answer you. Very similar to what he did with israel. Uh, leading up to the exodus. They were crying out. There's actually good reason to think in the beginning of the book of Exodus that at first, they weren't even crying out to the lord, they're just crying out.

What he heard to them anyway. The verse 19 here. He'll be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry. Though, the lord gives you bread of adversity and water of affliction. And then he goes into. How he's going to turn them back to his word? And his word is going to apply to their life.

This is the way. Walking it and his word is going to be right with them. Your ears shall hear a word behind you. God, describing the role of The preached word from their prophets is kind of like having Better than a hythefell. Standing behind you all the time, telling you exactly what to do.

That if you know the word of god and you meditate upon the word of god, it will be for you like having the very greatest counselor in the world. Always Over your ear to behind your ear whispering to you. Exactly the right thing.

Almost like cheating in life. But this is how. It is designed to be left. And so, not only the merciful devastation, but the subduing mercy. The mercy that brings us to submit to him. Again, and ultimate mercy. This language of the Beasts fortunes being reversed, actually takes us back to chapter 11 Where the ultimate mercy of god in the last day.

Is seen in the holy mountain of the lord, with the The lion and the lamb, and the oxygen, and the cobra, and the nursing baby. You know, all Playing together and the child is leading them because Uh, the the Rest of the created order is. Submitting to humanity again and humanity.

In the image of god is leading rightly even a child. Yeah, so that wonderful picture. From chapter 11 of the new heavens and the new earth in particular. And he uses images here that are picked up again and Revelation, 21 and revelation 22. The wiping away. Of every tier from their eyes.

The rivers of water which in that case, we see in revelation. Uh, in the city and no need foresee because of the rivers that are everywhere. And even the light that is brighter than sun or moon. So that they don't need a moon or a son. And in this case, Uh, the light of the sun of the place is Seven times an actual son.

So that we can see can't we what he's saying about? Who is the light of the place? Just as revelation, 21 and revelation, 22 pickup. And so the mercy that subdues us now, the mercy that devastates us and brings us to repentance This is the same mercy that gives us.

Perfect and everlasting blessedness, and god himself, and the new heavens. And the new earth. But ultimate mercy comes at the same time, doesn't it? Is ultimate judgment. It's very interesting, the picture in verses, 27 through 33. Of the same song being sung in both places. But for those for whom god is their happiness, The song and verse 29 is.

Like when a holy festival is kept and gladness of heart. But for those to whom god is hateful and a terror. They hate him and his fury is upon them. Like a river of brimstone up to the neck. It's two is with tambourines and harps and verse 32. Heaven would be a hell.

To the unbeliever, and it will be. Except for they won't have holy angels. They will have the souls of the just made perfect. They're not going to be in the new heavens

and the new earth. There's a place prepared for that. It's not the new heavens and the new earth.

Here. It's called topic, which was a nickname for Um, the burning that Was continually carried out in the hinim valley. And which in the new testament is called Gehenna. Uh, Which is. Toe factor gahanna or in some cases and i'm Different words that the bible uses. Uh, for the image of hell.

But it's not the burning of a trash pile in the ancient Near East. It is, the burning of god himself being the fire. And the glory and praise of god. Being the intensity of the fury. Really very dreadful at the end. When we see that. Whereas, at the beginning.

The comparison was. Being our own. So by our own ideas and our own plans or being the lords belonging to him, Submitting to him learning of him, hearing him, whatever he wants to say, not whatever. We want him to say. That's how it starts. But the difference between those two is literally the difference between heaven and now.

Because at the end, he is all. That we will have. The blessed. Who have him and together with him a new heavens and a new earth? And he will still be more than all the rest of the new heavens and the new earth to us, although all of it will be delightful.

But our delight in it will be an in. But for those, Who are still in their sin. Or they will have is him. And it will be fury and far. And so, May the lord grant to us to rejoice, to be his Especially when his word corrects us and tells us differently, then we want to do.

Or tells us differently than we thought about ourselves.

When may he give us, That whenever we turn to our own way, especially in. Um, ideas of salvation or ideas of theology. Our ideas of worship. That he would have the mercy to devastate. Our ideas. That we might be turned back to him and repentance.

And then, let's pray. Our gracious. God and our heavenly father, how we thank you for. Your providence and our lives even having Recently considered The dreadful judgment to being given over to our own ideas and now, To come to this chapter and hear from you. By your spirit. The severe about glorious mercy.

Of having our own our own ways, frustrated, and devastated. When you pray, lord that you'd show us mercy. That grants to us. Repentance a grants to us. Um, Submission and obedience. The grants to us yourself. As our great blessedness. Forever and ever. In a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

And where we? Oh lord will dwell with you. And you with us. So we pray that you would do, whatever is necessary unto that end. Unto your glory and our good in jesus christ. And his name. We ask it. Amen.