

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #43

Isaiah 30:18-33

When we search through the prophetic Scriptures, there are some remarkable predictions made about various cities. For example, it is predicted that Babylon, located near present day Baghdad, and the entire nation of Iraq will one day be completely obliterated (Isaiah 13:19-22). It is predicted that God will bring down a key city of the nations (Isaiah 25:2) and many cities of many nations (Isaiah 25:3). But one city will stand. One city will be an everlasting city and that city is Jerusalem. During the Millennium, which is the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth (Revelation 20:3-7), Israel will be esteemed as the people of God and Jerusalem will be the place where she will enjoy peace and safety and worship.

As chapter 30 begins, it begins with some negative news for the rebellious children of Israel, but at this point God changes His tone. F. C. Jennings said, “**Verse 18** is the pivot on which the spirit of prophecy turns from threatenings to consolations that begin with a promise of a settled home” (*Studies in Isaiah*, p. 365).

It is clear from the opening part of Isaiah 30 that God’s people had turned far away from Him, and yet, He still longed to be gracious and compassionate to them. **God’s people are in a covenant relationship with Him and His desire is to bless them, not punish them.** But here is the problem; **God is also a God of justice**, not just one of grace and compassion, and what His people need to do is to turn to Him and His Word and get any impure things out of their lives and out of their land. If His people are willing to do that, He will bless them. There is a change of emphasis in this part of the chapter and the focus moves from the subject of rebellion to potential restoration. The primary point Isaiah communicates is:

**GOD IS A GRACIOUS GOD WHO LONGS TO HAVE COMPASSION ON HIS PEOPLE AND BLESS HIS PEOPLE, BUT HIS JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT HIS PEOPLE TURN TO HIM AND HIS WORD AND THAT THEY DESTROY IMPURE IDOLS.**

There is great hope in this text for every believer who has wandered far away from God and His Word. There is great hope for every rebellious child of God who has plunged deep into this world. If that child of God will turn back to God and turn back to the Word of God he will discover that he will be blessed by God. God’s assessment and treatment of a rebellious child can be instantly changed. No matter how deep in rebellion the child may be, he can turn to the Lord today and instantly receive the blessings of God.

God is a God of justice and His desire is to bless His people and He will bless “all those who long for Him.” **God’s justice cannot just start pouring out blessings on His people regardless of how they live.** In fact, the Hebrew word “therefore” that begins **verse 18** means that since His people refuse to turn to Him, His blessings are presently withheld and even though His desire is to demonstrate grace, He will not do it until His people turn to Him.

Now as near as I can determine, there are **three main preliminary keys to getting the blessings of God** if you are in a covenant relationship with Him. If Israel, as a nation, would do this right now, amazing things would happen, and if any individual would do this, God would send His amazing blessings:

**PRELIMINARY BLESSING KEY #1** – God’s people must long for God. **30:18**

The particular word used for “long” is an interesting word. It is a word that refers to binding yourself to God and waiting on God over some period of time (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 276). The actual binding is by tying a knot. So Isaiah’s point here is that God desires to bless His people who have tied the knot with Him and trust Him and wait on Him over an extended period of time. There is coming a great day of blessing for Israel and the recipients of those blessings will be those who “long for God.”

The Apostle Paul tells those of us who live in the Church Age that God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly place in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) and that we are to walk worthy of this great calling (Ephesians 4:1). So in many ways we already have the blessings of God. However, there is no doubt that while we are traveling through this life, those who are right with God are those who long for God. If you are a child of God and you don’t long for God, it is relatively certain that you are in a state of rebellion.

**PRELIMINARY BLESSING KEY #2** – God’s people must cry out to God. **30:19-21**

The particular emphasis of the verb “cry out” is one of crying out to God, imploring Him for help in an attitude of sorrow (*Ibid.*, p. 251). For Judah this would mean a sorrow over her sin and rebellion against God. I believe the prediction here is a fulfillment of the words of Jesus Christ who said that Israel as a nation would be left desolate and would not see Him again “until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD (Matthew 23:37-39)!’” If Israel, right now, were to cry out to God imploring Him to help, God would intervene and He would hear them and answer them (Romans 11:23, 26). When Israel does finally turn to the Lord and cry out to God, there are five specific immediate answers she will receive:

**Answer #1** - God would no longer hide Himself from Israel. **30:20a**

Now the Niphal stem of the Hebrew verb “hide” means the action is self-induced. In other words, until God’s people cry out to Him, He will continue to hide Himself from them and His teachers will also continue to hide themselves from them too.

**Answer #2** - God would permit them to know His Teacher(s). **30:20b**

The word “teacher(s)” is a rare plural form of Hebrew word. The word refers to one who shoots for the truth as an archer or shooter shoots to hit its target (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 459). So the one teaching, is not just randomly sharing thoughts, but is zeroed in on truth just as a shooter at a target range would be zeroed in on a target.

Now the plural form of the noun “teacher(s),” which is used twice in this verse, may be a majestic plural, in which case, it could be a reference to the majestic teacher Jesus Christ, or it may refer to God’s true teachers such as Isaiah and others truly called and gifted by God. One of the true blessings that God gives to those right with Him is that He gives them a passion to be under a teacher who shoots straight truth. This is a tremendous blessing of God.

Now from an eschatological standpoint, this will all happen to Israel during the Tribulation and what we see here is that during the Tribulation things will be so bad for Israel that they will be eating bread and drinking water. In fact, they will begin the day praying, “Give us this day our daily bread.” During this time true teachers of God’s Word will be extremely rare, which in my opinion, they are today. But God promises that if His people will cry out to Him, they will know the true teacher.

**Answer #3** - God would permit them to see their Teacher. **30:20c**

Again notice the emphasis on being able to actually see true teachers. There will come a day when Israel and all people in the world will realize the value of being carefully taught the Word of God by a true, God-sanctioned teacher. Judah did not want to hear the truth from true teachers and still doesn’t to this day. Instead she wanted to hear pleasant words from false teachers. One day that will all change. **When people finally turn to God, one of the things they want is true instruction from God’s Word.**

**Answer #4** - God would permit them to hear His Word. **30:21a**

Not only would the eyes of the people see and recognize the true teachers of the Word of God, but their ears would hear the Word of God. We have said many times, the ability to hear God’s Word and mature in it is a permitted grant from God (Hebrews 6:1-3).

**Answer #5** - God would direct them to walk in His Word. **30:21b**

The ability to walk in the true ways of God is not ours, it is God’s. When God actually gives you the wisdom to know which way to turn in life, that is a special blessing. It is predicted by Ezekiel that there is coming a day when God will give a new heart to Israel and will cause them to walk in His ways (Ezekiel 36:22, 26, 27). This will be a wonderful blessing that will come to Israel when she cries out to Him.

Not only would people see the teacher of the Word and hear the message of the Word, but they would obey and walk in the ways of the Word. Don’t miss what is being said here - to walk in the right ways of God you need to hear true instruction from God’s Word given by a true teacher of God and we need God’s help to do it.

We see this all throughout Scripture. To actually walk in accordance with God’s Word is God’s work in our lives.

**PRELIMINARY BLESSING KEY #3 – God’s people must get rid of impure idols. 30:22**

What a contrast is presented here because what we see is that when God is blessing, people love the Word of God and they loathe their idols. This is a complete reversal of loves and hatreds. When God truly touches a life, the things the person once loved, they hate and the things they once hated, they love - especially the Word of God.

What we do see here is that before God will bless His people, they will have an attitude about idols of “good riddance.”

Now when we look today at Palestine in the Middle East and when we look at the eight promises that God gives to that land, it is quite apparent that these blessings of God are not there now. But God says that when Israel finally turns to Him, here is what He will specifically do:

**(Promise #1) - God will bless Israel’s land. 30:23a**

In the aftermath of the negative judgments that God has brought against His own people in their Promised Land, He would so prosper their land that it would be rich and luxurious. What is obviously needed in the Middle East to cause this is rain. Rain is not controlled by “mother nature,” it is directed and controlled by God. When God permits rain to fall on crops so that they may grow and so that people may have food to eat, it is a wonderful blessing.

**(Promise #2) - God will bless your livestock. 30:23b-24**

The Promised Land will be rich and their livestock will graze in plush, abundant pasture. Even the domestic animals will have plenty. The two animals mentioned here - oxen and donkeys were “indispensable” for agricultural work. God would see to it that they prospered too.

The interesting thing to realize is that when God’s people are in rebellion against Him and His Word, not only do they suffer, but everything around them suffers also. The fact that God withheld rain didn’t just affect His people, but it also affected their animals.

**(Promise #3) - God will refresh His people as He destroys their enemies. 30:25**

The Promised Land is dry and what is described here is a time of blessing in which God has caused channels of water to flow off every high hill and lofty mountain. This will happen in a context of a great battle and war in which God topples and destroys enemies.

Water is a serious problem in Israel. One Israeli told me fresh water is very rare and you typically do not want to drink the water. What is described here is a time of blessing in Israel in which water flows freely and there is no shortage of it.

**(Promise #4)** - God will light up the sky. **30:26a**

The light of the moon will be as bright as the light of the sun and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like an accumulation of seven days of light. I am not certain as to all of the ramifications of this, but one is that darkness will be gone. This specifically will be true pertaining to the Middle East. More than likely, all the people of the world will be able to see the bright lights that hover over Israel. There will be a total abundance of everything including light.

**(Promise #5)** - God will heal His people. **30:26b**

God will focus His attention on healing and mending His fractured people from Israel. Now I want you to carefully notice, God is the One who has inflicted bruises on His own people trying to get them to turn to Him. When they finally do, His emphasis will go from hounding to healing.

**(Promise #6)** - God will destroy the enemy nations. **30:27-28**

It is very clear that all of this will happen at a time of great slaughter, when nations are toppled by God. This, of course, describes the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6-19). God will come to the aid of His people from His high and heavenly and remote place. Notice **verse 27**; His lips are filled with wrath or indignation. God has the power to speak devastating judgment on people. As **verse 28** says, God will sift these nations like a sieve. He will pour out His wrath like a rising current. He will bring them to destruction, and when He does that Israel will be blessed.

**(Promise #7)** - God will cause His people to sing. **30:29**

This devastating judgment against world powers will cause Israel to sing. She will be worshipping God and she will be singing praises to the Rock of Israel, Jesus Christ.

**(Promise #8)** - God will destroy His people's enemies in His ferocious anger. **30:30-33**

God will fight for His people and He will strike the nations of the world and they will be terrified. In Isaiah's day, Assyria was the biggest, most powerful nation on the earth and God predicts that He will drop it with just His "voice." Every blow out of heaven will deal punishment. The Tribulation will be a time of God's wrath and God will destroy all powers.

Now the text ends with a solemn warning about a place called Topheth. Topheth was a site outside of Jerusalem where the worshippers of Molech sacrificed their children (II Kings 16:3; 21:6; Jeremiah 7:31-32; 19:6, 11-14). It is a place where idolaters destroyed their children and it is a place where God will destroy them. It was defiled by Josiah (II Kings 23:10), who tore down its altars and high places and poured all of the filth of the city of Jerusalem on it, and it was turned into a garbage dump and given the name "Gehenna." "Gehenna" is the New Testament word for hell. What God is promising here is that He will eventually throw all of the enemies of Israel into hell. He will burn them and destroy them in fire and brimstone.

Now you will notice that this place has been “prepared for the king.” This is an eschatological reference to the moment that God will throw the Antichrist and false prophet into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone (Revelation 19:20) and then after the 1000 year Millennium, He will throw the king of them all, Satan, into that same lake of fire as well (Revelation 20:10).

#### **PARTING THOUGHTS:**

- 1. God longs to bless His people and He will bless them if His people long for Him and cry out to Him.**
- 2. When God’s people have a desire to know true teaching from God’s Word, they are being blessed by God.**
- 3. When God’s people get impure things out of their lives, they will see God do some wonderful things.**
- 4. God is a just God and hell is a real place, and those who reject Jesus Christ will burn in a place of fire and brimstone.**