

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THEME:

Again the Prophet warns God's People not to look to Egypt for help but to look to the Lord for He will defend Jerusalem.

REMARKS:

So pressing was the danger, and so very evident the likelihood of the Israelites turning to Egypt, that the prophet continued to warn Judah of the futility of such a measure.

Egypt is more of a menace in this chapter than Assyria. Failure to turn to God is a grievous sin.

This is a very practical chapter for all Christians today, for most of us are inclined to lean on some material or physical support rather than rest upon the spiritual resources which God has provided.

OUTLINE:

1. **INDIGNATION toward Those Who Turn to Egypt for Help.** Verses 1-3
2. **INSTRUCTION to Those Who Turn to God for Help.** Verses 4-9

2. COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay 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 Israel, neither seek the Lord!**

This is the fifth woe and is pronounced on those who go down to Egypt for help. Observe that the movement is always down to Egypt— never up. Observe also that the woe is not upon Egypt but upon those who turn to Egypt. Egypt did have chariots and horsemen, and their forces were strong and many.

A materialistic philosophy says that it is smart to look to Egypt. Most of us have some "Egypt" upon which we depend for help.

The real source of difficulty was that God's people did not look to Him nor did they seek Him. This was their real difficulty. Since they did not trust Him, they turned frantically to some outside, physical display of power, happy is the man in any age who can say with the Psalmist:

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God (Psalms 20:7).

Verse 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 evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

There is a bit of irony here. After all, the Lord is as wise as those who turn to Egypt think they are. God is against both those who turn to Egypt and Egypt herself. God is opposed to the apostates and that in which they trust. God opposes the god of forces and the worshipers.

Verse 3—Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

Materialistic philosophy argues otherwise. This world's thought is to trust in men and not in God, that it is better to put confidence in the atomic bomb than in any spiritual power—thus the wise men of the world reason. God contradicts this, and brings it into the laboratory of life as an experiment.

Verse 4—For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

Here the prophet elaborates on the benefits of turning to God. The Lord is likened to a lion that has taken his prey and is not frightened by the approaching shepherds. Thus God will not be deterred from defending Mount Zion.

Verse 5—As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

Here the figure changes and the Lord is likened to birds flying. Thus He will come down to preserve Jerusalem.

Verse 6—Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

The plea is made to turn to the Lord, since it is His intention to protect His people. They can safely trust Him; however, they are in a state of revolt.

Verse 7—For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

Here the prophet looks on to the day when they will turn from their idols to God.

Verse 8—Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

Although the Assyrian is the immediate danger, the emphasis in this chapter has been upon the danger of turning to Egypt, and not the danger of an attack from Assyria. The Lord has already determined that the Assyrian would fail and fall in his attack upon Jerusalem. The real danger was, therefore, in turning to Egypt.

Verse 9—And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

The Lord will deal with the Assyrian. The Lord's people are not to deal with the Egyptian. Their confidence should be in the Lord.

~ end of chapter 31 ~

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