

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 69

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Samaria Falling to The Assyrians by Don Lawrence CIR 2011

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Sixty-Nine

GOD WARNS AGAINST FALSE ALLIANCES

June 14, 2020

Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 30:1–11

Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin, ²that set out to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt! ³Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the refuge in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. ⁴For their princes are at Zoan, and their ambassadors are come to Hanes. ⁵They shall all be ashamed because of a people that cannot profit them, that are not a help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

⁶The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. ⁷For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore, have I called her Rahab that sitteth still

⁸Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. ⁹For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; ¹⁰that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, ¹¹get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (ASV, 1901).

THE SIN OF NOT DEPENDING UPON GOD

Isaiah 30:1–2

Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin, ²that set out to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt (ASV, 1901)!

The Lord is saying to the Children of Israel that they are *rebellious children*. He says that they sin because they violate His Law by trusting in the Egyptians instead of turning to Him. The double sin is:

1. Not trusting
2. Making an alliance with Egypt as a refuge from the Assyrians.

The corrupt Egyptians, who were the Israelites enemy, were as sinful as their other enemy, the Assyrians. So, they sought protection with one enemy from another. This was all in violation of their Law and special relationship with the God of this universe.

Deuteronomy 17:16

¹⁵thou shalt surely set him king over thee, whom Jehovah thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother ¹⁶Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; forasmuch as Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way (ASV, 1901).

Egypt was corrupt; the Jews were to have no dealings with the country, even once they were settled in their neighboring land of Israel.

When the kingdom of Assyria threatened to invade the northern kingdom of Israel, King Hoshea turned to Egypt to form an alliance against Assyria (Cir. 730 BC). He was one of the wicked kings of the Ten Tribes, who became a vassal of Assyria, and sought the help of So, the Pharaoh of Egypt (II Kings 17:1). God through Isaiah warned against turning to Egypt for help instead of Him. He described them as they “*that set out to go down into Egypt.*” One result, was the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel and the exile of the ten tribes who lived there (II Kings 18:12).

Hoshea reigned concurrently with Ahaz, king of Judah, the third king under whom Isaiah prophesied. Although it is not mentioned in Scripture, this overture to Egypt probably initially started during the reign of the wicked Judean king Ahaz who had turned the Southern Kingdom into an idolatrous nation.

Ahaz invited the Assyrian empire to meddle in Judah’s affairs through an alliance against Syria and Israel in 735 BC. (II Kings 16:1–9). Judah rebelled against Assyria during the reign of King Hezekiah in about 701 BC (II Kings 18:1–7), and the account of this rebellion in II Kings 18:21 reveals that Judah appealed to Egypt for military aid during the conflict (II Kings 19–21). This is the setting for Isaiah’s warning in this passage that Judah should not seek Egypt’s help against Assyria.

After Samaria fell in 722 BC, Judah asked Egypt for help when it chose to rebel against Assyria, to which it had been paying tribute since then. Although the good King Hezekiah is praised prominently Isaiah’s chapters 36–39, he is not mentioned or condemned here. This is probably because he did not initiate the contact with Egypt but was forced into the alliance by his advisors. The reliance upon Egypt manifested great sin, because it demonstrated both Israel and Judah’s failure to seek God as its rock and shelter (Psalm 18:2). For Judah to trust Egypt was to “add sin to sin”. The double sin was:

1. Violation of the Mosaic Law Deuteronomy 17:16
2. Denial the power and authority of God

They were putting their confidence in the weakness of men and not the strength of the Creator, which is always a foolish move in any situation.

This then provides the Spiritual message for all. There is no other person to trust our circumstances other than the Lord God of this Universe. This was known from the Mosaic Law given about 1445 BC and reaffirmed by King Solomon about 950 BC. Obedience to God's Law is the key to receiving His blessings, in all things. When a nation loses its trust in God many problems begin.

Proverbs 3:5-7

*⁵Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; And lean not unto thine own understanding
⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, And, he shall direct thy paths. ⁷Be not wise in thine own eyes: Fear the LORD, and depart from evil (KJV).*

The Southern Kingdom of Judah engaged in a series of ungodly alliances with her idolatrous neighbors which led to the Babylonian captivity.

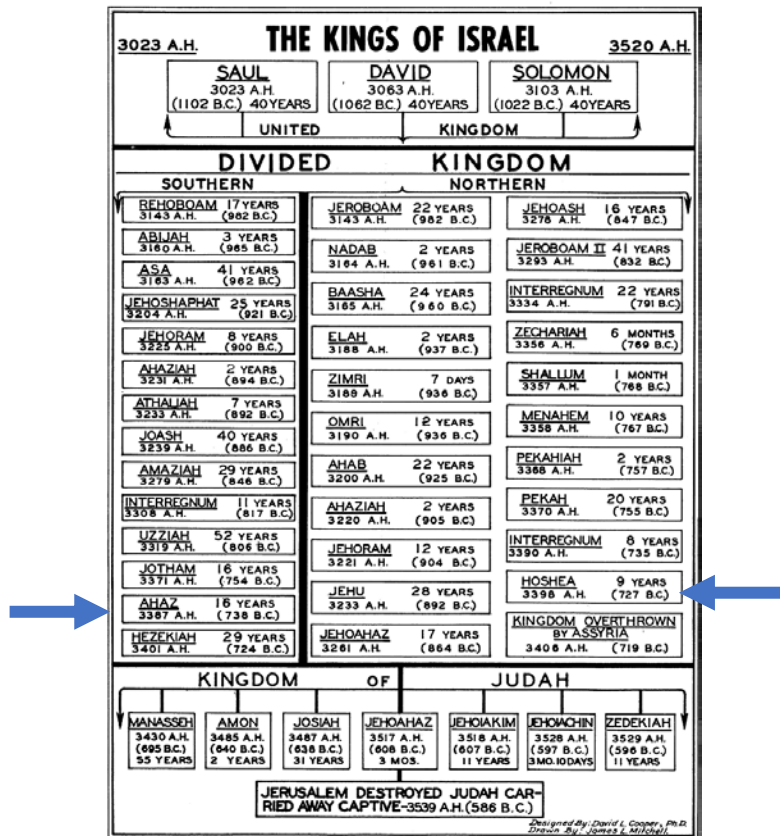


Chart by David L. Cooper from <https://www.biblicalresearch.info/page506.html>

Ezekiel 23:17-21

“¹⁷And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her soul was alienated from them. ¹⁸So she uncovered her whoredoms, and uncovered her nakedness: then my soul was alienated from her, like as my soul was alienated from her sister. ¹⁹Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, remembering the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. ²⁰And she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. ²¹Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in the handling of thy bosom by the Egyptians for the breasts of thy youth.” (ASV, 1901)

The Babylonians were beginning to assume domination over the Assyrians as world leaders. The help that Judah sought from these two Mesopotamian nations basically amounted to “revealing” herself to them so they would take advantage of her. As she revealed increasingly more of herself to them, Jehovah God said, “*then my soul was alienated from her.*” He withdrew from her. He remembers her doing the same thing back in the earliest days of the Nation Israel’s existence in Egypt where she engaged in spiritual and physical debauchery with them. When Babylon defeated the Egyptians under Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in 605 B.C., Jehoiakim the Judean king lusted after a relationship with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and became his vassal (II Kings 24:1). The Jews found the Babylonians to be brutal when they came to Jerusalem. The Babylonians were worse than either Assyria or Egypt, and Judah turned away from them in disgust. Now they defiled her, and the Jews wanted to escape Babylon’s dominance, but *they did not view themselves as sinning, nor did they turn to God.* So, while Jerusalem turned from Babylon, God turned *from* Jerusalem who had exceeded the Northern Kingdom’s unfaithfulness. God destroyed the Northern Kingdom for her disloyalty in 722 BC, and He now He rejected Jerusalem referencing again their sin filled time in Egypt, before the Exodus, to them. He brought the Babylonians against them in three invasions, 605 BC, 597 BC and finally in 586 BC.

GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION

Isaiah 30:3–4

³Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the refuge in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. ⁴For their princes are at Zoan, and their ambassadors are come to Hanes (ASV, 1901).

The Lord says that the Israelites will be disappointed with the help and assistance they expected from Pharaoh, and so they will be ashamed of the fact that they made an alliance with him, placing their confidence in him. God then says through the prophet Isaiah regarding the source of the result of this alliance; *and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion;* that they will be confused. Now God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). Since Satan is the Father of Lies and the deceiver of the world (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9) we see God turning them over to him to confuse the Israelites when they find themselves not being helped by the Egyptians, in whom they put their trust. Everybody, individual and nation that trusts in the

creature, sooner or later are ashamed and confounded; but those that trust in the Lord never are. The Lord then describes the region the ambassadors of Israel went in Egypt.

The place in Egypt called Zoan, is where Egyptian royalty were raised up, as it is here said, *his princes were at Zoan*. The other region, here called *Hanes*, is the same as *Tahapanes* (Jeremiah 2:16, 43:7–9). Here Pharaoh had a house or palace (Jeremiah 43:9). So, this is the reason the ambassadors went there, to seek the decision makers in Egypt for help.

GOD AFFIRMS THE RESULT OF THEIR MISTRUST

Isaiah 30:5

⁵They shall all be ashamed because of a people that cannot profit them, that are not a help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach (ASV, 1901).

The princes, the ambassadors that were sent down to Egypt, and the king who sent them, were under false expectations. The leaders of Israel through the ambassadors, felt no shame in their requests, and probably were elated by the promises made to them. It was the common people who were filled with shame; because the Egyptians, could not or would not help them. So, the subsequent feelings of the Jewish nation was shame, when it was discovered by sad experience that no reliance was to be placed on “the strength of Pharaoh,” who were a people that could not or would not help them.

So, far from being of any advantage to them, by helping and assisting them against their enemy, the result was only of them being ashamed of their false expectation. They should have never placed any confidence in them for help.

Isaiah 30:6–7

⁶The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. ⁷For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore, have I called her Rahab that sitteth still (ASV, 1901).

They loaded animals to travel to the south, through Egypt. This is part of the disgrace with which the Egyptians shamed them. The Jews loaded animals with treasure for Egypt as tribute and bribes as an incentive for protection. They traveled through treacherous terrain to a country that will not help them. Elsewhere in this Book (Isaiah 13:1, 15:1, 17:1, 19:1, 21:1) the word *Massa* is translated as a burden or load is here properly rendered *prophecy*, rather than load. Accordingly, the verse is rendered: *A prophecy regarding wild animals in the desert, which will attack those bringing treasure to Egypt*. The viper and flying serpent refers to a particularly poisonous species of snake that reproduce only once every seventy years.¹ The flying serpent does not actually have wings; rather, it jumps some distances to attack its pray. The word translated as *Rahab* means arrogance or pride here. It comes from their belief in a sea dragon that was

¹ <https://www.dafyomi.co.il/bechoros/points/be-ps-008.htm>

threatening in its appearance but actually very slow in action.² They are arrogant, sitting idle.” This, refers to Egypt. They are arrogant without justification, for they are an indolent, idle nation.

The Jews true power lies in remaining in their place, and not turning to Egypt for aid that will not be helpful, only harmful. Only God can help them.

THE MESSAGE IS ALSO FOR THE FUTURE

Isaiah 30:8–11

⁸Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. ⁹For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; ¹⁰that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, ¹¹get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (ASV, 1901).

The Lord now tells Isaiah to write what He has said in a book. It is against this wicked generation. This generation of leaders will not listen to the prophets. They *say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.* He wants it to be available to the next succeeding ages, and for ever and ever. The message here is of supreme importance to God. Therefore, so it shall, for the book of the scriptures no doubt, shall continue, and be read, to the end time even during the Tribulation. It is to be written for at least three reasons:

1. To shame the leaders of Israel at the time of Isaiah, who would not hear and pay any attention to it when it was spoken. Because it was written, it will survive the time the prophecy God gave through Isaiah. The leader’s children may learn and obey it, though they will not.
2. To justify God in the judgments He was about to bring upon them; people will be tempted to think he was too hard upon them, and over-severe. They need to know how very bad they were, how very provoking, and what lighter means God tried with them before He brought it to this extreme.
3. As a warning to others not to do as they did, lest they should suffer the same end result. It is designed for admonition to those of the entire world in all times, even those *upon whom the ends of the world have come*, (1 Corinthians 10:11). It is useful for God’s teachers to relate to people of all times and all places to trust in God always and not rely on our own understanding.

Next message: GOD WANTS US TO TRUST HIM CONTINUED

E-mail: Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org Call: 877-706-2479

² Unger, Merrill, Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN, pg. 1223.