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## Isaiah 30

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Isaiah 30.

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### Topics.

- Stubborn children, who seek Pharaoh's protection in Egypt.
- The lioness, lion, adder and serpent carry riches on donkey's backs.
- I have called her, "Rahab who sits still."
- Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things.
- A thousand shall flee until; you are left like a flagstaff on a mountain.
- In that day the light of the moons will be as the light of the sun.
- The LORD comes in thick smoke to sift nations with destruction.
- The voice of God, the Rock of Israel will be heard in fire and hailstones.
- The history of Judah, Israel and the Babylonian captivity.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster. Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it:

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They

are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

**The practical application:** of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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## ISAIAH 30:1-2

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### Stubborn Children, Seek Pharaoh's Protection in Egypt.

- **Isaiah 30:1-2:** "Ah, stubborn children," declares the LORD, "who carry out a plan, but 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, (walk to go down into to Egypt in KJV) without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection (shadow in KJV) of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

**Shadow:** comes from the Hebrew word (*tse!*) it literally means shade (i.e., as a shelter from heat), it carries the idea of protection, defence and shelter.

- The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. <sup>6</sup>The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. (Psalm 121:5-6).
- The bramble said to the trees, "If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade." (Judges 9:15).
- Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 17:8).
- He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1).

The inhabitants of Jerusalem should have been seeking shelter under the shadow of God and not the shadow of Pharaoh King of Egypt. Jerusalem's ambassadors went down to Egypt seeking their protection and shelter. They placed their confidence in Egypt and thought themselves safe from their enemies, by having an alliance with such a powerful nation as Egypt. This was a common fault of Israel, when troubled by their neighbours on one side, they sought for protection and shelter from others, instead of turning from their rebellion, idol worship and wickedness and looking up to the LORD their God. To seek shelter in Egypt and form an alliance with

Pharaoh and receive armies, horses and chariots from him, to assist them against their enemy was utter foolishness and against the word of the LORD. The prophets of God had constantly been telling the people of Judah at Jerusalem that God was about to bring swift judgment on them (Jer. 25:3-7). God used Assyria and Babylon to do this. The LORD told the inhabitants of Jerusalem if they surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon God would look after them while they were in captivity, but if they did not go into captivity and stayed at Jerusalem or sought shelter elsewhere they would be destroyed" (Jer. 27:8-15). Most of Judah obeyed and went into Babylonian captivity, but some remained at Jerusalem and others fled to Egypt for protection. The LORD through Isaiah is saying that those who rebelled against His word and fled to Egypt for protection will instead be brought to shame. The sin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was extremely great at this time and by sending ambassadors down to Egypt to seek their help rather than seeking God and His will they were adding to their sins, since the LORD had through the prophets already told them that He would nurture them in Babylon and that this was His will for them at this time.

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### ISAIAH 30:3-5

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#### **Seeking Pharaoh's protection will be Your Humiliation and Shame.**

- **Isaiah 30:3-5:** Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation. <sup>4</sup>For though his officials are at Zoan and his envoys reach Hanes, <sup>5</sup>everyone comes to shame through a people that cannot profit them, that brings neither help nor profit, but shame and disgrace."

**Zoan:** was an ancient Egyptian city built in the Delta seven years later than Hebron, both Isaiah and Ezekiel refer to it as an important city (Numbers 13:22) (Isaiah 19:11) (13 Ezek. 30:14).

**Hanes:** was a place in Egypt mentioned in association with Zoan that seems to have been in the Delta.

As great a nation as Egypt was and as vast as the land of the Empire extended and as mighty as their armies were for the people of God to go seeking after their protection and help was an act of foolish rebellion against the word of the LORD and would become their shame and humiliation. This is because the armies of Assyria would take the Egyptians captive.

- Then the LORD said, "As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush, <sup>4</sup>so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, the nakedness of Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Then they (those who put their hope in Egypt) shall be dismayed and ashamed because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their boast. <sup>6</sup>And the inhabitants of this coastland will say in that day, 'Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And we, how shall we escape?" (Isaiah 20:3-6).

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### ISAIAH 30:6

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#### **The Lioness, Lion, Adder and Serpent carry Riches on Donkeys.**

- **Isaiah 30:6:** An oracle (burden in KJV) on the beasts of the Negeb (of the south in KJV). Through a land of trouble and anguish, from where come the lioness and the lion, the adder (viper in KJV) 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.

**Oracle:** (burden in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*massa'*) which literally means a burden (i.e., affliction, suffering, trouble and misery), this means that the primary focus of this oracle is one of grief, sorrow and condemnation for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**Negeb:** is the desert region lying to the south of Judea, it is the probable site of Bebir, a city of Judah 12 miles south west of Hebron.

**The beasts of Negeb:** (v6) applies to the donkeys and camels loaded with treasures that the ambassadors of Judah were taking with them to Egypt for the purpose of securing a friendly alliance with the king of Egypt.

**They will carry their riches:** (v6) gifts designed to prompt the Egyptians to enter into an alliance. The following verses show that it was a common custom in all the nations of the East to use camels and donkeys to take presents when one king sent an embassy to another to show friendship and civility and to use camels and donkeys to carry heavy and burdensome loads across the desert to bless a person with.

- Jacob stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, <sup>14</sup>two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, <sup>15</sup>thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. (Gen. 32:13-15).
- Joseph sent to his father Jacob as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. (Gen. 45:23).
- Asa king of Judah took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house and gave them into the hands of his servants. And sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria saying, <sup>19</sup>"Let there be a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me." (1 Kings 15:18-19).
- Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasures of the king's house and sent a present to the king of Assyria. (2 Kings 16:8).

It is as though Isaiah sees in a vision passing before his eyes the ambassadors of Jerusalem travelling with their camels and donkeys heavily laden with rich treasures, traveling southward toward Egypt to make an alliance with them, and cries out, "O the heavy burden, the load of treasures going to the south!" Isaiah seeing such a vision would be heavily burdened himself seeing God's people seeking the help of the Pharaoh King of Egypt instead of trusting God and obeying the word of the LORD.

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**Lion's, lioness, vipers and fiery, flying serpents:** (v6) since Egypt at this time was joined to Ethiopia which was of all countries the most suitable for these dangerous creatures this may be understood literally. Everyone understands the fierceness of a lion and lioness, but not all maybe aware that a fiery, flying serpent refers to an actual serpent that twists itself by the tail to a branch and makes a spring like action to throw itself to another branch. It was said that it darted from trees onto man or onto beast or onto its prey that came within its reach and if it stung any of these its sting would bring inevitable death. This is why the Arabs call them the flying serpents or flying snakes.

They were often found in the woods and known to have abounded in the Arabian deserts and Egypt. (The Greeks and Roman also referred to this species of serpent as a fiery flying serpent). Some of these creatures were worshipped in Egypt. Cleopatra destroyed herself with the bite of an asp which she had concealed for that purpose. Since these creatures did exist in the land of Egypt and Ethiopia Isaiah maybe in this vision literally referring to them or he maybe using these lethal creatures to symbolise the cruelty of the rulers of the Egyptians and Ethiopians and the danger and harm the Israelites would bring upon themselves by making an alliance with them.

**To a people that shall not profit them:** (v6) refers to the Egyptians who were of no help to the Jews to deliver them from the invasion of the Assyrian armies.

**I have Called Her, "Rahab who sits still."**

- **Isaiah 30:7:** Egypt's help is worthless and empty; therefore I have called her "Rahab who sits still."

Many believe Rahab to be some type of dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but it becomes clear after a careful look at the following verses that this is not so:

- God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab (the proud helpers do stoop under him in KJV) (Job 9:13).

Rahab in this context refers to prideful mighty and powerful nations and those aligned to them that God has humbled and will humble.

- God divides the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smites through the proud (Rahab in Hebrew). (Job 26:12).

In this context Rahab refers to the proud.

- I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me (Zion and the city of God): behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. (Psalm 87:4).

Rahab in this context refers to powerful nation (most likely Egypt).

- God crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. (Psalm 89:10).

In this context Rahab refers to a powerful nation that is an enemy to God and His people.

- For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength (Rahab in Hebrew) is to sit still. (Isaiah 30:7).

Rahab in this context refers to the strength of Egypt

- Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?  
<sup>10</sup>Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? (Isaiah 51:9-10).

In this context Rahab refers to Egypt at the time of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea.

These verses make it very clear that Rahab is not some dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but refers to prideful powerful nations that are opposed to God and His people (this of course would include the kings of these nations). In the Hebrew language the word (*rahab*) means proud and strength it carries the idea of prideful strength and acting proudly especially against God and His people. The message concerning Rahab is that no one no matter how powerful and mighty a king, a nation or an army maybe no one can stop God from accomplishing His purposes.

The expression, "I have called her Rahab who sits still," carries the idea that Egypt (symbolised by the name Rahab) means that Egypt was utterly powerless to defend Jerusalem against the fierce and mighty armies of Assyria. They were powerless for two reasons, firstly, because Assyria had the great army and secondly, because God was using Assyria to bring His judgment upon the rebellious inhabitants of Jerusalem.

## Write it on a Tablet and inscribe it in a Book as a Witness Forever.

- **Isaiah 30:8:** 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.

**Seer:** the following verse shows that a seer was the same as a prophet:

- Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's prophet was formerly called a seer. (1 Sam. 9:9).

The word seer comes from the Hebrew word (*chozeh*) it literally and specifically means a beholder in vision (as looked upon with approval), but can refer to one who mentally gazes at a vision or to one who perceive and contemplate a thing (with pleasure). It can refer to a faithful or unfaithful prophet, to those who gazes at the stars seeking prophetic signs or to those who see visions in their mind or outside of themselves (i.e., like a hologram or dream). The use of the word seer most likely fell into disuse, because of the men claiming to speak in God's name, but were pretenders using clairvoyance which brought the name of the true prophet of God into discredit. However, though the name was dropped the prophet of God did not cease to be a seer; and to see visions which was one of the highest gifts of the Spirit of God (Joel 2:28). These verses apply to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who against the word of the LORD fled to Egypt for protection from the impending invasion of Babylon. How grieved must the LORD have been as He looked down from heaven upon the city, He put His name on and upon the people:

- He said were His son who he called out of Egypt and loved even when they were a child. (Hosea 11:1).
- He said He gave birth to and carried from the womb even to their old age. (Isa. 46:3-4).
- He said were His allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- He said were a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

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And now these people God had set His love on have become so rebellious and grossly corrupt that He is now about to use Assyria (and later Babylon) to bring His judgment and punishment upon them.

**The LORD tells Isaiah to write this prophecy on a tablet:** (v8) this is because the events that are about to come upon God's people are totally abnormal to what should be happening to them. God's desire was to bless and prosper everything they put their hand to and exalt them to be the head of all nations and not the tail and in total contrast to this His is about to bring them to utter ruin. This is why He tells Isaiah to write the prophecy in a book. It was to be a remembrance and warning to all future generations that if His people turn to other gods, rebel against His name and act wickedly they will not escape judgment and punishment. God is a God of love, but love does not do away with justice. Justice complements love, because justice protects the innocent from harm and hurt, physically and spiritually. For Israel's history during this period of time see the title:

- The History of Judah, Israel and the Babylonian Captivity.

At the end of this chapter.

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### ISAIAH 30:9-11

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#### Do not Prophecy to us what is Right; Speak to Us Smooth Things.

- **Isaiah 30:9-11:** For they Judah 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 prophecy to us what is right; speak to us smooth 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."



The heart of the people of Judah had become so far removed from God and His ways that they did not want to hear the words Isaiah spoke to them. In earlier chapters we are told they mocked and scoffed Isaiah for the words he spoke. They wanted to hear smooth words, words that allowed them to live and do as they pleased. They believed as long as they adhered to their outward ceremonies and holy days and kept their religious customs and traditions, they were right before God regardless of how they lived.

They could be likened to the following two groups of people today:

1. To those who religiously go to church every Sunday, but give God no thought every other day of the week and say and do as they please regardless of how it reflects on the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To those who only go to churches who preach a message of prosperity, healing and success and that appeals to self, pride and ego.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem not only did not like what Isaiah was saying, but did the exact opposite by sending ambassadors with gifts to the King of Egypt to seek his help adding to their sin.

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### ISAIAH 30:12-14

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#### **A Potter's Vessel that, is Smashed so that Not a Shard is Found.**

- **Isaiah 30:12-14:** Therefore 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; <sup>14</sup>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" (pit in KJV).

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**Shard:** comes from the Hebrew word (cheres) it literally refers to an earthen or stone pot and a piece of pottery.

**Cistern (pit in KJV):** comes from the Hebrew word (gebe) it literally means to collect and can refer to a reservoir for water, a marsh or a marish, pit.

**You trust in oppression and perverseness:** (v12) means that they trust in Egypt rather than the LORD their God the Holy One of Israel. It is most likely spoken of as trusting in oppression, because Egypt had oppressed them for four hundred and thirty years, and oppression was the nature and character of Egypt's rule and called perverseness, because Egypt worshipped many idols and gods.

**Like a breach in a high wall, bulging out:** (v13) the picture here is of a very strong and high wall having such a powerful force pushing against it that it is only a matter of time before it collapses. The high wall signifies the fortified wall of Jerusalem, while the breach in it signifies the sin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The idea carried is that the breach in the wall is at first unnoticeable but gradually and over time it comes to a crisis, likewise the decay of the Jewish state is gradual, but it like the breach in the wall will come to a crisis.

The prophetic message is that because of the gross sin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem the fortified wall of the city will be broken down. (the armies of Nebuchadnezzar did this when they invaded the city).

**A potter's vessel that is ruthlessly smashed:** (v14) this is a picture of the fortified wall of Jerusalem being broken down. It is likened to a potter who casts to the ground a clay jar (because it is nothing like what it was originally designed to be) with such force that it is utterly smashed and shattered into small pieces when it hits the hard ground.



**To dip up water out of the cistern:** (v14) pots of clay were used to collect water from a water pit, it was common for small piece of these jars to accidentally get damaged (i.e., a piece would break off), but there would still be enough of the jar held together to collect water.

**Take fire from the hearth:** (v14), scoops (i.e., a small shovel) to collect ashes from the hearth of a fire or the potter's oven were molded from clay. Here Isaiah is saying that the clay water pot will be so shattered that none of it will be able to be salvaged. It will be impossible to find amongst its fragments even one a piece (i.e., a shard) large enough to scoop water up from a water pit (i.e., a cistern) and large enough to collect ashes from a fire. The symbolism is that there will come, a complete dissolution of the Jewish political government and religious system and utter ruin to the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. This came about not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians who came against Jerusalem after them (and later by the Romans).

**Assyria and Israel, Babylon Judah and Egypt:** in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah Assyria invaded Samaria, laid the land waste and took the ten tribes of Israel into captivity. The Assyrian armies then invaded the land of Judah and destroyed all their fortified cities, after this they besieged the city of Jerusalem but could not enter its gates. God sent an angel into the Assyrian camp and destroyed 185,000 soldiers, so the Assyrians returned to their land. Later God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as his servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring His judgment upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The armies of Babylon entered the city and burned the people's homes, broke down the fortified wall, pillaged the Temple of God and took the people into captivity for seventy years. Later and after many campaigns Babylon conquered the Empire of Assyria which meant that the ten tribes of Israel and the two tribes of Judah were under the Empire of Babylon's oppressive authority for seventy years. During this time Babylon invaded and conquered Egypt. This meant that the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had rebelled against the word of the prophets and looked to Egypt for protection and shelter instead of obeying God and trusting His word was a futile exercise, because they also ended up under the rule of Babylon. Imagine their shame as they came before their brothers and sisters in captivity that had trusted God and obeyed His word and gone into Babylonian captivity instead of rebelling against God and fleeing to Egypt.

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### ISAIAH 30:15-17

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#### **A Thousand shall Flee until; You are like a Flagstaff on a Mountain.**

- **Isaiah 30:15-17:** 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 (Beacon in KJV) on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.

**No! We will flee upon horses:** (v16) here the hardness of heart toward Isaiah and God's word and the blatant rebellion of these Jews is manifested. They are like a small rebellious child whose father tells them to do something for their own good and the child stands defiantly before him and says, "No!" God will not force Himself upon anyone, if we are determined to go our own way against what we know to be His will, He will allow us; He will not violate our free will or force or impose Himself onto anyone. God is not a beggar. He invites people into His Kingdom, everyone is free to accept or reject the invitation. However, those who deliberately and consciously act against His will when they know better or refuse the invitation and deny God will suffer for it. Not because God wants to inflict suffering, but because by denying Him we are also denying the blessings that come with accepting him, even an earthly father will withdraw his favour from a son who blatantly rejects him and lives a lifestyle of wickedness.

**Your pursuers shall be swift:** (v16) the Babylonian army is pictured as pursuing those who fled to Egypt, because Babylon invaded and conquered Egypt and those who fled there were either slaughtered or taken captive. The LORD through Isaiah is telling the inhabitants of Jerusalem if they trust God and go into captivity to Babylon they will be saved (Jer. 27:8-15). Their quietness and trust will be their strength, means that their surrender to the word and will of God, in contrast to rebelling against it will be their strength and what saves them.

In contrast to this if they rebel against God's word and flee to Egypt they will be like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain like a signal on a hill, meaning that their rebellion against the word of the LORD will result in their destruction and their destruction will be a visible beacon and sign that attracts attention and will be clearly seen, as the fulfilment of the LORD'S prophetic word that is now being spoken to them by the prophet Isaiah.

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## ISAIAH 30:18-22

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### **God will not Hide Himself, Jerusalem's Cry will be Filled.**

- **Isaiah 30:18-22:** Therefore 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, 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. <sup>22</sup>Then 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!"

The LORD'S desire is not to punish His people, but to show them mercy, but though He is a God of love He is also a God of justice which means He cannot excuse His people while they are guilty of gross wickedness and corruption. Here Isaiah pictures Him as patiently waiting for His people to turn from their rebellion and wickedness and from their idols and false gods and humble themselves and return to Him so that He can act according to justice and show them mercy.

**Blessed are all those who wait for him:** (v18) refers to those who faithfully and patiently wait for the deliverance of the LORD during their seventy year captivity in Babylon, but by extension can be applied to all the faithful of Christ's Kingdom who faithfully wait for the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ as they live in today's global and worldly Babylonian system spoken of in Revelation chapter seventeen and eighteen.

**A people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem:** (v18) here the LORD through Isaiah gives a promise and a word of comfort for the inhabitants of Jerusalem who go into captivity to set their faith and hope upon.

**The LORD will be gracious to you at the sound of your cry:** (v18) again this is God's promise that He will hear their prayer of deliverance during their seventy years in captivity. It should be noted that seventy years is almost a lifetime, many of those who went into captivity would have died in captivity, the focus is that Israel as a nation would not be utterly annihilated, but would again prosper and flourish as it once did.

**The LORD gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction:** (v18) embraces the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and to their seventy years in captivity

**Your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see Him:** (v20) the teacher here refers to the LORD, He hides himself

means He withhold His favour and His blessing, likewise He will not hide Himself anymore means He will bless and favour them. The following verses show that God did this by using Cyrus king of Persia as his anointed shepherd:

- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped*, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, *who call you (Cyrus) by your name*. <sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, *I call you by your name, I name you*, though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me*, <sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).
- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: '*Surely God is in you*, and there is no other, no god besides him.'" (Isaiah 45:14).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. Cyrus after Conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.

**Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"** (v21) is most likely taken from one or both of the following two ideas:

1. A father seeing his children running toward danger calling out, "stop."
2. A shepherd seeing their sheep heading for danger and to calling out to them or their sheep dogs. The central idea is that they would not be left without faithful shepherds and spiritual guides to direct them in the right path which they were called to follow and also warn and rebuke them when they went astray. This would literally refer to the voices of Nehemiah, Ezra, faithful Levites, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and the faithful prophets that taught them after the seventy-year captivity.

The following verses show that the voices of these faithful men guided the people in the right way.

Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites.

- As soon as I (Nehemiah) heard these words (that the remnant who had survived the exile was in great trouble) I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven day and night for the people of Israel (Nehemiah 1:4-6).
- All the people gathered as one man and told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. <sup>2</sup>So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and he read from early morning until midday, in their presence and the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. (Nehemiah 8:1-3)
- Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat and drink sweet wine for this day is holy to our Lord and all the people went their way with great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them. (Nehemiah 8:9-12).

Haggai, Zechariah and faithful prophets.

- Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. <sup>2</sup>Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them. (Ezra 5:1-2).

This entire chapter is focused upon the rebuilding of the Temple after the seventy Year captivity. Malachi, who rebuked the rulers, the priests and people of Israel for turning from Gods ways and called them to repent.

- If you (the priests) will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. (Malachi 2:2).
- You (the priests) have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 2:8).
- From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:7).
- Those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. <sup>17</sup>"They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. (Malachi 3:16-17).

This would also include faithful kings who reigned after the seventy-year captivity and did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and tore down the ashrams and altars in the land of Israel and that had been erected in the city of Jerusalem.

**Spiritually:** the expression, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," (v21) can refer to the conscience that has been taught the word of God or to the Spirit of God guiding and directing those who are submitted to Him and His will.

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11

**Prophetically:** it echoes the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus said: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16:13).

And also echoes the voice of the apostle saying as Isaiah prophesied:

- This is the way, walk in it. (Isaiah 30:21).

**You will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and gold:** (v22) these gold idols refer to the two golden calves that Jeroboam had built when the United Kingdom of Israel split. At this time Rehoboam remained king of the land of Judah and of Jerusalem (the two tribes) while Jeroboam became the king over Israel (the ten tribes). Jeroboam said in his heart:

- Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. <sup>27</sup>If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." <sup>28</sup>So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." <sup>29</sup>And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. (1 Kings 12:26-29).

These two worship centres were of course totally opposed to the will of God. The following verses show that these two golden calves became an ongoing sin for the ten tribes of Israel:

- The LORD will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin." (1 Kings 14:16).

- Jehu king of Israel did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan. (2 Kings 10:29).
- Now you (Jeroboam and all Israel) think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods. (2 Chron. 13:8).

Added to the sin of these two golden calves are the following sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. Unrestrained these sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land. They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley. They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land. Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property. Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**The lesson for today:** by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness.

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## ISAIAH 30:23-26

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### In that Day the Light of the Moons will be as the Light of the Sun.

- **Isaiah 30:23-26:** 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.

**Seven:** in the Scriptures often denote a complete or perfect number; and indicates completeness or perfections. It is the sacred number and sevenfold carries the idea of seven days being concentrated into one making its light seven times as intense and clear as it normally would be. It implies perfection and a great magnification of spiritual light, happiness, blessedness and joy.

**Light:** in the Scriptures is an emblem of purity, intelligence, happiness, prosperity; as darkness is an emblem of ignorance, calamity, and sin. Multiplying light seven times carries the idea of magnifying its brightness. The idea is that there will be a great increase of light, as if the light of the moon were suddenly increased to the brightness of the sun.

**The light of the sun shall be sevenfold:** (v26) as if there were seven suns collected together and shining as one. Spiritually this carries the following two ideas:

1. Israel is united as one nation, worshipping the one true God and not only embracing His laws and statutes, but also willingly doing them.
2. To all the promises of God, the word of God and His forgiveness, mercy, grace, salvation and eternal life being found in Christ and Christ alone.

**The LORD binds up the brokenness of his people:** (v26) (the breach of his people in KJV) the word bind (and breach) comes from the Hebrew word (*sheber*) it literally means a fracture and figuratively to ruin, hurt, destroy, crush, break down or break in pieces. It can carry the idea of being broken hearted or bringing to birth. The expression, "The LORD binds up the brokenness of his people," refers to the following three things:

1. To God healing the breach between Himself and Israel and between the two tribes of Judah and the ten tribes of Israel. The calamity that is to come upon Jerusalem and bring the city to ruin and the people being taken captivity for seventy years can be seen as a wound inflicted upon the people. God would heal this wound by healing the fracture between Judah and Israel and by restoring the people to their own land and to their former blessings so that they dwell in peace in contrast to continually being attacked by enemies.
- 2 To God making Jews and Gentiles to be one-fold under one Shepherd and reconciling them together in one body through Christ so that there is no longer a separation and fracture between them.
- 3 To God through Christ literally and miraculously healing the sicknesses and illnesses of those who came to him and reconciling Jews and Gentiles in one body through the bloodstained cross of Calvary and through the preaching of the Gospel.

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13

The prophetic language of verses twenty-three to twenty-six allows the prophecy to be applied to the following three periods of Israel's history, the first two with certain limitations and the third being the perfect and complete fulfilment.

- 1 The expression, "In the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall," (v25) can be applied to the day that Cyrus King of Persia conquers the Empire of Babylon and gave the people of Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and homeland.
  - Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing. 23"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up."(2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-3).

In this scenario the prophesy would refer to the day that the people are dwelling in Jerusalem and have destroyed their idols; established true worship in the city and the LORD is no longer hiding Himself from them (i.e., withholding His favour), but instead will bless their land with rain and running brooks of fresh water so that the land produces abundantly and their livestock increases. This is exactly what happened at this time. In this context the expression, "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," (v26) carries the idea that the spiritual life, joy and glory of the people of Israel will be greatly magnified which it was when they returned to their own land united as one nation, worshipping the one true God and not only embracing His laws and statutes, but also willingly doing them.

- 2 The future times of the Messiah and the Gospel, in this scenario the expression, "In the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall," (v25) can be applied to the following two events (or embrace both) firstly to the fall of the powerful prideful, hypocritical religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) and the Levitical priesthood since the need for these was done away with by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man or woman today needs a human priest to intercede before God for them, the only priest anyone needs today is the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly it could refer to the great calamities that came upon the Jews by the hands of the Romans and ultimately Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. In this context the expression, "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," (v26) is a hyperbolical expression, used to highlight the exceeding great light of the Gospel which will by far exceed the light of the former dispensation of law. It carries the idea that the light of seven days is combined together in one day which means that its light would be far brighter and glorious than ever it was before. The spiritual meaning of this is that the light of God (i.e., His word) will not be limited to a single nation and one language, but will go out to all nations and all languages and in this sense the light of God will be far brighter across the face of the earth than it has been at any other time of history. The sense is that those walking in this light would have a much clearer view of God's plan of salvation, His character and His plans and purposes. The following verses (there are many others) show that it was common for Isaiah to use light to signify the Saviour and Redeemer and the word of God (especially of the Gospel).
  - O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD (i.e., the law, and the word of the LORD) (v3) (Isaiah 2:5).
  - The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Jesus) (v6-7); those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. (Isaiah 9:2).
  - Arise, shine, for your light (the Holy One of Israel, the Savior and Redeemer) (v9, 16) has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. <sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-5).
- 3 To the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this scenario the expression, "In the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall," (v25) can be applied to the fall of the entire Babylonian system of the world spoken of in the following verses:
  - Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. (Rev. 18:2).
  - The kings of the earth will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." (Rev. 18:10, 16, 19).
  - Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more." (Rev. 18:21).
- 4 And to Christ's return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the



earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

In this context the expression, "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," (v26) carries the idea that the spiritual life, joy and glory of those united with Christ will be overwhelming and that the light (i.e., knowledge of God) will be multiplied a hundredfold across the face of the earth. At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The language of this prophecy not only allows the prophetic words of Isaiah to be a comfort to God's people during his generations in that it assured them that their nation would be restored and not wholly destroyed, but also allows it to be a comfort to God's people of all future generations. When the New Jerusalem comes the glory of it will surpass the brightness of the moon and of the sun for they are temporal whereas the New Jerusalem is eternal. Isaiah's vision transcends God's earthly Kingdom and foresees the heavenly Kingdom the New Jerusalem full of the light of the glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. <sup>20</sup>Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. (Isaiah 60:19-20).

The light of the New Jerusalem state.

- The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, (Rev. 21:23-24).
- Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:5).

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## ISAIAH 30:27-28

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### The LORD comes in thick Smoke to Sift Nations with Destruction.

- **Isaiah 30:27-28:** 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 (vanity in KJV), and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray (a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err in KJV).

The expression, "burning with anger; thick rising smoke; lips full of fury; a tongue like a devouring fire; breath like an overflowing stream and sifting the nations with a sieve of destruction are all expression of extreme fury. The reason this fury is magnified in such vivid and colourful language is because it is not just one nation that is in focus, but many nations (v28) that have aggressively set themselves up as enemies of Israel.

God is saying that He is about to pour out His fury upon these nations. It could be likened to the language used when speaking of the seven angels in the book of Revelation pouring out God's wrath upon the world.

**That reaches up to the neck:** (v28) carries the idea that God's fury is not going to stop at one nation only but overflow into many nations.

**The sieve of destruction:** (v28) (vanity in KJV) the use of a sieve is to separate what is good from what is not, everything goes into the sieve which means that a sieve of destruction would carry the idea that no nation will escape this judgment all who have brutally and cruelly acted against God's people or treated them unjustly will be punishment.

**A bridle that leads astray:** (v28) a bridle is normally used in a horse's mouth to guide it in the right way to go, here the people are picture with a bridle in their mouths, but instead of it leading them in the right way it is leading them astray. The bridle in this context would speak of the kings, the rulers and leaders of the people who are in these privileged positions to lead the people and thereby their nation in the right way, but, rather than doing this they are leading them to destruction.

**The LORD cometh from far:** (v27) could refer to the following two events:

- 1 The angel of the LORD that went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians so that when the people arose early in the morning and saw the dead bodies Sennacherib king of Assyria returned home and lived at Nineveh. (Isaiah 37:36-37). It would certainly be right and proper to refer to this angel as the LORD coming from afar (i.e., coming from heaven).
- 2 Since verse twenty-eight refers to this event as an overflowing stream and of sifting the nations it better fits Cyrus the Great the King of Persia who not only conquered Assyria and Babylon, but also overflowed into many nations conquering them all and becoming notable for the largest empire the world had ever seen. It would also be right and proper to refer to Cyrus as coming from afar and as coming from the LORD especially when it is considered God said of Cyrus:
  - He would take Cyrus his anointed by the right hand to subdue nations and kings. (Isaiah 45:1).

- He would go before Cyrus and level the exalted places. (Isa. 45:2-3).
- He will call him by name and equips him. (Isaiah 45:3-5).

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## ISAIAH 30:29-30

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### The voice of the God of Israel will be heard in Fire and Hailstones.

- **Isaiah 30:29-30:** 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.

**The mountain of the LORD:** (v29) refers to Mount Zion the mountain the city of Jerusalem is built upon. Though Mount Zion is not distinguished for its elevation or grandeur and though it had nothing in itself to claim attention or to excite wonder, it was the most exalted and honoured above all mountains because it was selected as the place where God was to be worshipped and the place where God's city and God's temple is built and God's worship was established. Even though Mount Sinai had all the awesome glory of the Almighty God descend upon it and the law came from there, Mount Zion excels in excellence over it. This is because from Mount Zion came the Messiah the Christ attended by a multitude of angels celebrating his birth and on Mount Zion the Messiah the Christ came into his own temple as Malachi in the following verse prophesied concerning him.

- Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1).

Added to all this royal glory, multitudes of angels ministered to the Lord in his temptation, at his resurrection and accompanied him in his ascension all from Mount Zion.

- Mount Sinai is the mountain of the Old Covenant of Law in contrast Mount Zion is the mountain of the New Covenant of Grace.
- Mount Sinai's glory of the law pales when stood before Mount Zion's grace and Christ's death and resurrection upon it.

Neither Mount Sinai nor Mount Zion can glory and boast in themselves for the following reasons. Mount Sinai is not famous or respected as a holy mountain and a mountain of God because of any majesty of itself, but because it was upon this mountain God descended and gave the Ten Commandments. It is this awesome and holy event that exalts Mount Sinai and not the mountain itself. Likewise Mount Zion has no fame or glory of itself, its glory comes from being the honoured mountain God chose to build His Holy city upon and is the mountain that the Messiah the Christ the Saviour of the world died and rose again from. The real strength is not in Mount Zion itself, but in the LORD, who is the head of the thousands of chariots and the heavenly host surrounding it and as such is the protector of his chosen dwelling-place. Zion is sometimes used as an ancient name for Jerusalem itself and because it is often used in poetic and prophetic passages it can refer to:

- The hill the city of Jerusalem is built on.
- The city of Jerusalem.
- The temple and by extension Judah and the people of God.

**To the Rock of Israel:** (v29) refers to Israel's promised Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he did not appear during the Old Testament age, the faithful were still saved by faith in him, because they by faith looked:

- Toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in Genesis. (Genesis. 3:15).
- Toward the promised seed of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4) (Gal. 3:16).
- Toward the prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deut. 18:15) (Acts 3:22) (Acts 7:37).
- Toward the Holy One to come (whose body God will not let see corruption in death) (Psalm 16:9-11).
- Toward the promised seed of David. (Psalm 89:4) (Psalm 132:11) (Jeremiah 23:5) (Matthew 1:1).
- Toward the Messiah the Christ all the Old Testament prophets and the Scriptures speak of such as (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The Lord Jesus himself said, "I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7) (the scroll of the book refers to the Scriptures).

Added to this even though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them; they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like an invisible spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

**You shall have a song as in the night:** (v29) means that a day is coming when they will again be safe to openly hold feasts and sing songs of praise at sunset in contrast to the fear they would have had should they attempt to hold such feasts while under Babylonian authority and oppression.

**The LORD'S arm:** (v30) refers to Cyrus king of Persia who God used as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon and give the people of Israel written permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the House of God (2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-3).

**The LORD'S majestic voice:** (v30) refer to the voices of the captives of Israel triumphantly and with great joy marching from the ruins of Babylon to their beloved city Jerusalem singing songs of praise to the LORD their God while the surrounding nations looked on with wonder and amazement.

**A flame of devouring fire:** (v30) this refers to the might armies of Cyrus invading the Empire of Babylon. The destruction and terror the warriors of Media Persia's armies is so great that they are likened to a devouring fire, because fire destroys everything in its path and a storm of hailstones, because they crush everything they fall on and no one can defend themselves against them.

**The Assyrians will be Terror-Stricken when the LORD Strikes.**

- **Isaiah 30:31-33:** 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 (the grounded staff in KJV) that the LORD lays on them will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres (tabrets and harps in KJV). Battling with brandished arm, he will fight with them (he will fight with it in KJV). <sup>33</sup>For a burning place has long been prepared (Tophet is ordained of old in KJV); indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre (the pile) made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulphur (brimstone in KJV), kindles it.

**He (the LORD) will fight with them:** (v32) (he will fight with it in KJV) means the LORD will fight with His rod (which maybe an angel or any other agency He chooses to use) against the enemies of Israel. In this context it means the LORD will strike and destroy the Assyrian armies as a warrior strikes and slays his enemy with his sword.

**The appointed and grounded staff:** (v32) in the context of these verses refers to God's judgment, it is referred to as appointed, because everyone born of a woman is also born to a day of judgement and referred to as grounded because it is sure, righteous and true, because its foundation is God.

**It shall be with tambourines, lyres, tabrets and harps:** (v32) means that at every stroke of God's judgments upon Assyria Israel should sing songs of praise and victorious triumph accompanied with musical instruments. The idea is that in all places where the Assyrian is overthrown (or any other enemy of Israel) there will be the sound of rejoicing with instruments of music. Whenever and wherever God brings down His rod of judgment upon His enemies and the enemies of His people their defeat shall be celebrated by God's people with joy, music and songs of praise.

**Tophet:** (v33) (Topheth) comes from the Hebrew word (*Tophteh*) it literally means a place of cremation as a place of burning and carries the idea of a place of loathing. It refers to the valley of Hinnom (named after the son of Hinnon) which is very near to Jerusalem (it is also called Gehenna). It was the place where the Canaanites, and afterward the idolatrous Israelites, cruelly sacrificed their children, by making them pass through the fire, meaning, by burning them in fire to Molech a huge brass image with a hollow trunk and very large arms. The arms of the hideous idol were heated up and the child to be sacrificed to it was lifted onto its heated arms which would slowly rise to the beat of drums and the sacrificial child would roll into the mouth of the frightful idol and thereby seemingly swallowed by it. It is supposed by most to have been called Tophet, because of the timbrels, tabrets or drums that were beaten during the sacrifice to drown out the cries of the sacrificial child that was being inhumanly murdered. It became used as a place for Jerusalem's rubbish, dead bodies, bones, and carcasses, the filth and dung of the city and such sordid things were thrown into it. Fires were kept continually burning to consume the rubbish, to purify the atmosphere and prevent disease from spreading. Following are Scriptures that speak of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, Tophet and Molech. The location of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, Tophet and Molech.

- Then the boundary goes up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the southern shoulder of the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem). And the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the Valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. (Joshua 15:8).

Child sacrifices were forbidden.

- You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (Lev. 18:21).

Ahaz Manasseh and the sons of Judah burned their sons.

- Ahaz (king of Judah) walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. (2 Kings 16:3) (2 Chron. 28:3).
- Manasseh (king of Judah) burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. (2 Kings 21:6) (2 Chron. 33:6).
- The sons of Judah have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. (Jer. 7:31).

Josiah destroys Topheth and Molech.

- Josiah (king of Judah) defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech. (2 Kings 23:10).

The Valley of the Son of Hinnom is the valley of slaughter.

- Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. (Jer. 19:6).

**Overview:** Topheth and Molech were in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom very near Jerusalem. It was not only utterly forbidden to sacrifice children, but also profaned the name of God. Ahaz and Manasseh kings of Judah and the sons of Judah burned their sons and daughters in fire to Molech. Josiah (also a king of Judah) destroyed Topheth and Molech so that that no one could burn their son or their daughter as an offering to Molech. The Valley of the Son of Hinnom will become known as the valley of slaughter.

(Joshua 15:8) (Lev. 18:21) (2 Kings 16:3) (2 Chron. 28:3) (2 Kings 21:6)  
(2 Chron. 33:6) (Jer. 7:31) (2 Kings 23:10) (Jer. 19:6)

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**A burning place has long been prepared for the king:** (v33) (Tophet is ordained of old in KJV) though this may mean that God had prepared this valley specifically for the king of Assyria, it is more likely that it carries the idea that this valley was so ideal for gathering such large armies as Assyria had (i.e., 185,000 soldiers) and destroying them in one place that it is as though it had been designed specifically for such a purpose, some feel that it means that God destroyed them by fire as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah.

- Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. (Gen. 19:24).

But it better fits the angel that the LORD sent into the camp of the Assyrians to destroy the king's army.

- That night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians and when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. (2 Kings 19:35).

Symbolically it would certainly be right and proper to refer to this total annihilation of the Assyrian army as a burning place since fire not only destroys everything in its path, but also symbolises God's utter disdain for a thing.

**The breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulphur:** (v33) (brimstone in KJV) sulphur and brimstone come from the Hebrew word (*gophriyth*) it literally means cypress-resin and is likened to sulphur because it is equally inflammable. In the Scriptures it is used to denote a fire of great intensity and utter destruction because such a fire destroys everything in its path. The expression, "its pyre (the pile) made deep and wide, with fire and wood," (v33) does not mean that they would be consigned to eternal hell-fire, but signifies the punishment and utter annihilation destined for the king of Assyria and his army. The continual and the consuming flames of

fire in the valley of Hinnom are used in Scripture to highlight God's abhorrence toward such a people and the awful and utter destruction that they will suffer. The symbolic picture presented is of God building a fire by gathering together large logs of wood and then breathing on them to start the fire. The reality is that the Assyrians would be utterly destroyed as if they were a large pile of wood in the valley of Hinnom that will be fired by the breath of God or by the angel that slayed 185,000 of their soldiers or it could literally mean that the corpses that were lying round the city after the angel had destroyed the Assyrian army were literally burnt thrown into the valley of Hinnom and burned there.

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## THE HISTORY OF JUDAH, ISRAEL AND THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

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God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them. But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah; laid their farm land waste; attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple.

Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years. Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God molded them like a master potter molds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly, Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).



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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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