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These are Deceitful Children Unwilling to Listen to the LORD

30: 8-17

These are deceitful children unwilling to listen to God DIG: What was the “official” response to Isaiah? What inescapable logic do you see in God’s judgments here? What does Isaiah mean by the image of the wall? In contrast to their alliance with Egypt, what is Isaiah’s plan for their deliverance? What will happen as a result of Isra’el rejecting this plan?

REFLECT: Isra’el was tired of hearing the Word of God, and wished to be left alone or listen to others as well. What in your life are the pleasant things or illusions (30:10) you would rather listen to at times? How have these resulted in high walls fencing out God? Have you experienced this wall of illusion eventually cracking, bulging, and collapsing around you (30:9-14)? What effect has that had upon you? With what are you building a new wall? Compare 30:15 and 28:12 with Matthew 11:28-30. What differences do you see? What similarities? What thoughts or pictures come to mind as you consider the LORD as a resting place? If you are a workaholic, reliant on swift horses, how would you begin to apply 30:15 to your life? How does a busybody or workaholic find rest and quietness? What is there to repent of? Has the foolishness in your life been wasted? Or are you still learning?

Here **Isaiah** turns from talking about the dependence upon **Egypt (30:1-7)**, to the attitudes that encouraged the alliance. It was basically a refusal to trust **God (30:15)**, which in fact is what **Chapters 7** through **39** are all about. And having made up **their** mind about the issue, **they** didn’t want to discuss it any further. The fact was that **they** had the Torah, the mercy seat and **the ark of the Covenant**, which contained **the golden jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded and the stone tablets of the covenant (Hebrews 9:4)**. But **they** said in effect, “Don’t confuse us with the facts, our minds are made up.”

They were stuck in their ways just as the Pharisees and Sadducees were when

Messiah came. **They** were convinced that right standing before **God** was achieved through **the Oral Law** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Ei](#) - The Oral Law**), and refused to hear anything that might be at odds with that conviction (**Luke 6:6-11**). But **Isaiah** told **the Jewish religious leaders** of **his** day that if **they** refused to hear the truth from **him**, **they** would have to hear it from **ADONAI Himself**. **God** would **wait** until **they** had been reduced to a state of helplessness in **their** own efforts. The good news is that **He** waits **to be gracious (30:18)**.

*It is ironic that only after we break ourselves on the results of our pride that we are able to see that **He** was offering **His** grace to us all along. The truth remains, however, if we refuse to **wait** for **ADONAI**, **He** will **wait** until our circumstances force us to turn to **Him**.*

The people did not want to listen to **ADONAI's** instructions through **Isaiah**. Therefore, **God** told **His prophet** to **write** it down, or **inscribe it, on a tablet or scroll** to serve as an eternal reminder of the foolishness of this alliance. **The LORD** commanded: **Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll**, Because the prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled, as we will see in **Chapters 36** and **37**, it will serve as an **everlasting witness** to authenticate **Isaiah's near historical prophecy against Assyria (30:8)**. Remember the test of a prophet is to predict some near things that can be fulfilled exactly, and then he can be trusted to make prophecies far beyond his own lifetime. The reason to inscribe this truth is **Israel's** state of sin.

The information **on** the **tablet** was to serve as **an everlasting witness**. It was not for the prophet's own hardened generation, but for generations in the future (**8:16**). **They** would look back on the record of **God's** fulfilled promises, both for discipline and for blessing, see how they were fulfilled, and *then* have faith in **Him**. Consequently, **they** could learn from **their** mistakes and the foolishness of the nation would not be wasted. The next three verses (**30:9-11**) summarize for us why such a **witness** was necessary.

These were **rebellious people (30:9a)**. This is an astonishing condemnation in the context of the ancient Near East. All the other nations would only record their triumphs. If we are to learn anything of their failures, we can only look to other sources, certainly not from their own national literature. But not so **the Judean's**. **Isaiah's** own bitter words have preserved the evidence of **their rebellious** failure. What **God** thinks of us is more important than what we think of ourselves.

They were also disappointing **children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD's instruction (30:9b)**. They failed to act like respectful and obedient **children**. By refusing **to listen to** the Torah, which is the voice of **God** to them, they disappointed **ADONAI**.

Isaiah describes **Israel's** inclination for false **prophets**. **They say to the seers, "See no more visions!" and to the prophets, "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions" (30:10)**. These are probably not the actual words of the people, but as in **29:15**, they represented their true feelings. **Isra'el** was not asking **the prophets** to stop prophesying; **they** are asking them to change **their** message. **The people** wanted to pretend that **they** were pious (**1:2-31**). **They** said: **Leave this way, get off this path (30:11a)**. **The path** is the teaching of the Torah. **They** wanted to turn the direction of the prophetic message. In that way **they** would stop **the Holy One of Isra'el** from ever **confronting** them. By keeping the **prophets and seers** from proclaiming **His real** message they, in effect, didn't have to think about **their** state of sin (**30:11b**). However, **Israel's** desire for false **prophets**, and rejecting the message of the one true **prophet**, led to consequences.

This is an increasing problem today. **Children** are not being taught about consequences in life. You can do whatever you like and never have to pay. "Self-esteem" has nothing to do with performance and behavior. Thus, it is emerging that some of the people with the highest self-esteem are thieves and crooks. The triumph of "feel good" psychology is killing us, because all of this is an illusion. There are consequences in life, and those in the public eye who teach otherwise are the modern equivalent of the false prophets. They tell us we can have everything we want with no responsibility for the outcome. One of the tragic examples of this trend is the epidemic increase in male irresponsibility for the children they have fathered. The social costs of this phenomenon are only beginning to be felt. We need prophets who will declare, "What is right" and not what people "want to hear."¹⁰⁵

The consequences of Judah's Indifference: Immediately after **they** said **they** did not want to be confronted, **Isaiah** confronts them with more words from the **Holy One of Isra'el**. **He** declared: **Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Isra'el** says: **Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit (30:12)**. **Isaiah** reiterates the cause and disobedience to **God's message** through **His prophet**. As a result of rejecting **his message**, relying **on oppression** (plans to avoid **God's** counsel) and **deceit** (which **Egypt**

would practice on **them**), **they** would undergo judgment because **they** despised the words of **the prophets**. The refusal to be instructed by **God** is a **sin**, and if not corrected, over time, will lead to disaster. This **sin** is described in two figures, both of which indicate the suddenness and totality of the impending disaster.

The first consequence will be the fall of the house Judah. Isaiah uses an analogy and says that **their** spiritual condition is similar to houses built of clay. Of these there are several varieties. Some have a framework of wicker hurdles thickly daubed with mud. In others the walls are made of layers of mud placed one over the other, each drying before the next is put on. Others still are made of sun-dried bricks. This style of building is very ancient, and is still common in many parts of the East. A thief might easily break through **a wall** of this kind, and modern thieves are as ready to do it as were the burglars who lived in the days of **Job 4:19**.¹⁰⁶

This sin will become for you a high wall (30:13a). The first figure of disaster is **a wall** that is ready to topple. The interval from the first cracks until the actual collapse may be quite a long time, but when the collapse comes it is sudden, terrible and irreversible. The judgment would come suddenly, **like a cracked and bulging high wall that suddenly collapses in an instant (30:13b)**. So, it would be with **Judah's** refusal to rely on **ADONAI**. Years would pass, but one day **the Assyrians** would stand at the door of **Jerusalem** with all of **Judah** in ruins behind **them** (see [Gr - Please Speak to Your Servants in Aramaic](#)).



The second figure is that of **a ceramic jug**. When the wall collapses it will be shattered as suddenly and completely as a jug dropped on a rock. One minute the jug was whole, the next it was only pieces. **Isaiah** prophesied that **the Judeans** would **break like pieces of pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment would be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern (12:14)**. **They** will be broken in so many **pieces**

that each piece will be of no use. In short, **Judah** was overconfident, thinking that **God** would protect them no matter how great **their** sin.

We saw the same thing outside Washington, DC in 1861 before the Civil War. The Union Army had convinced itself that it could dispose of the ragtag Confederate Army in short order. After all, they had better-looking uniforms and more up-to-date equipment, and they were better drilled. As a matter of fact, however, they knew little about discipline, determination, and courage – things the Southerners had a good deal of. In the battle, it quickly became apparent that in terms of raw fighting skill, the northern army was badly outclassed. Soon setbacks were turned into defeats, defeats into retreats and the retreats into headlong flight. The picnickers who had come out to watch the “jolly fight” led the rush back to the defenses of Washington.

If we place our confidence in the wrong things, adversity and difficulty will destroy us. We will have no resources to meet them. But if our confidence is in **God** and not in ourselves, these things will only drive us closer to **Him**. We know that **He** will not fail us, so we can be faithful, even to death. That kind of fortitude means that defeats do not turn into routs. We can fall back to a new line of defense and fight it out with courage, knowing that **God** is at our back. **The Judeans** had forfeited that knowledge by turning to **Egypt**, just as the overconfident the Union army had trusted in their own superiority.¹⁰⁷

The second consequence will be flight and depopulation. The cause of **their** consequences is again the rejection of the prophetic message. **For this is what Adonai ELOHIM, the Holy One of Isra’el** says: **In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it (30:15).** **Isaiah’s** plan for **their** deliverance was **repentance and rest**. In the **KJV**, **return** means *in the sense of conversion*. In the **NIV**, **repentance** also means *in the sense of conversion*. Both have the fundamental idea of *turning around or turning back*. This would be how **they** would obtain **their rest**. The rest is to stop trying to achieve salvation by any human activity and resting in the grace of **God**. Then **they** would have **quietness and trust**, or confidence. But **Isaiah’s** contemporaries rejected all this; **they would have none of it**. **They** had obviously failed to learn from the mistake of Ahaz (**7:3-4**). It was this original subjugation of **Judah** under **the Assyrian** yoke that was the motivation for **their** current course of action. Now **Isaiah** offers them another message. Do not rebel by trying to free yourself from the dominance of **the Assyrian** Empire. In time **God** will free you. But instead, **they** wished to rely on **their** own plans, reject the prophetic message,

and turn to **the Egyptians** for help. Therefore, **they** continued to make the same mistake that Ahaz had made.

The Holy One of Isra'el had extended **His** arms to **them** with a gentile word of strength. **God** said: **This is the resting place, let the weary rest, and: This is the place of repose - but they would not listen (28:11).** They could have hidden beneath **His wings** like chicks, but **they** would not (**Matthew 23:37**). Why not? They were proud and overconfident. Friend, that is a dangerous combination.

Instead of depending on **God**, **they** depended on military might. Therefore, **their** consequences would be twofold. The first consequence would be flight. **You said: No, we will flee on horses. Therefore, you will flee! You said: We will ride off on swift horses. As a result, your pursuers will be swift (30:16).** If **they** were to rely **on horses (31:1)**, **God** said **they** would be forced to **flee**. This is the opposite of the blessings promised for obedience in the Torah (**Leviticus 26:8; Deuteronomy 32:30**) and in **Joshua 23:10**. Because **they** trusted in the wrong things, when those things fail, **they** would be completely undone.

The second consequence would be that of depopulation. **A thousand will flee at the threat of one Assyrian; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill (30:17).** The emphasis is on the solitary condition under which **Judah** will be left. Being easily alarmed by the threat of the enemy, **they** would stand alone **like a flagstaff on a mountaintop** as a warning to others not to count on military strength.