

# Futile Confidence

Isaiah 30:1-26

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**BIG BEND  
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## **Isaiah 30:1-7 – Futile Confidence in Egypt (NIV)**

*“Woe to the obstinate children,” declares the Lord, “to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin; <sup>2</sup> who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh’s protection, to Egypt’s shade for refuge. <sup>3</sup> But Pharaoh’s protection will be to your shame, Egypt’s shade will bring you disgrace. <sup>4</sup> Though they have officials in Zoan and their envoys have arrived in Hanes, <sup>5</sup> everyone will be put to shame because of a people useless to them, who bring neither help nor advantage, but only shame and disgrace.”*

*<sup>6</sup> A prophecy concerning the animals of the Negev: Through a land of hardship and distress, of lions and lionesses, of adders and darting snakes, the envoys carry their riches on donkeys’ backs, their treasures on the humps of camels, to that unprofitable nation, <sup>7</sup> to Egypt, whose help is utterly useless. Therefore I call her Rahab the Do-Nothing.*

### **v1 – Who were the rebellious children?**

The leaders and people of Judah during the time when the Assyrian army was attacking Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel would soon be conquered by Assyria, and the people of Israel would be taken into exile. The Assyrians would then come against the southern kingdom of Judah.

### **Why were they rebellious?**

They did not seek counsel from God and made plans not prompted by the Holy Spirit.

- It is one sin to reject the LORD, and another sin altogether to trust in something else. Therefore, to do what Judah did in this situation is to add sin to sin.
- They compounded their sin even when there were consequences that should have caused them to change direction.

### **Do we see this going on today?**

Yes... doubling down on failed policies...

- how do you fix inflation? Print more money!
- Vaccine no longer effective? You need a booster!

### **v2 – Why did the Judeans go down to Egypt?**

*To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh:* The leaders of Judah looked to Egypt for protection against the coming Assyrian invasion.

### **Why was it a problem that the Judeans looked for deliverance from Egypt rather than God?**

Their first thought was to fix their problem themselves with help from another nation. They should have sought God’s help first and He might have offered us Egypt’s help but that would have been God’s deliverance not their own.

### **v3 – What was the problem with the strength of Pharaoh?**

From the perspective of heaven, the strength of Pharaoh was nothing. As the LORD saw it, Egypt was no substance, just a shadow.

### **v4-5 – Why would Egypt be of no help to Judea?**

*They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them:* The ambassadors of Egypt came to Judah and saw that Judah had nothing to “give” them.

- It was foolish for the leaders of Judah to trust in a nation that looked at them this way.

### **v6 – Why was there a burden against the beasts of the South?**

Isaiah proclaimed a burden against the pack animals of Judah, which would carry the riches of Judah down to Egypt, through the wilderness, in a foolish attempt to purchase protection against the Assyrians.

### **What do you think is a fiery flying serpent (NKJV)?**

During their exodus from Egypt, the Jews encountered fiery serpents whose bite was fatal in Numbers 21. The flying part probably described that they struck out of nowhere so suddenly they appeared to be flying.

**v7 – Why would Isaiah feel sorry for the donkeys that would carry the treasure of Judah down to Egypt?**

*The Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose:* Despite the riches that the pack animals bring across the desert, Egypt would not help Judah at all, so one could call Egypt Rahab-Hem-Shebeth, which means “Rahab Sits Idle” or “Rahab the Do-Nothing.” Rahab is a name, but it is also the Hebrew word for pride, and is sometimes used as a title for Egypt (Psalm 87:4).

**Isaiah 30:8-17 – A Rebellious People (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the days to come it may be an everlasting witness. <sup>9</sup> For these are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the Lord’s instruction. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!” <sup>12</sup> Therefore this is what the Holy One of Israel says: “Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, <sup>13</sup> this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. <sup>14</sup> It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern.” <sup>15</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. <sup>16</sup> You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ Therefore you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift! <sup>17</sup> A thousand will flee at the threat of one; 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.”

**v8 – Why did God want this prophecy recorded?**

*Now go, write it before them on a tablet...that it may be for a time to come, forever and ever:* God told Judah this before it happened, and wanted it documented. This was so when it all unfolded exactly as the LORD had spoken, Judah could have greater trust in Him.

- This is a principle for all prophecy that we may grow closer to the Lord...  
Revelation 19:10 – *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*

**v9-11 – What was the ugly truth that God wanted the people of Judah to understand.**

*That this is a rebellious people, lying children...who say to the seers, “Do not see”:* God wanted Judah to hear from His messengers, the prophets, but they couldn’t handle the truth. They wanted religion, but they didn’t want the living God of heaven to have a real presence in their lives (*cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us*, v11).

**v10 – What did the people of Judea want to hear from their prophets?**

*Smooth things, prophesy deceits (illusions, NIV):* they wanted good news, not the ugly truth about themselves.

**Is there a problem today with religion that rejects the presence of God?**

2 Timothy 4:3-4 – *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

We see this today in churches with all the compromising with the world with woke theology (social justice gospel), universalism, socialism, globalism, etc...

- Having a flawed view of the inerrancy of Scripture...
- Seeing the Bible as the story of man’s search for God rather than God’s inspired revelation to mankind
- Rejecting the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture

**v12-14 – What would be the consequence of rejecting the truth from God?**

*Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall:* God promised that because Judah trusted in Egypt instead of Him, everything would be broken and collapsed. Judah would be like a collapsed wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. Judah would be like a shattered clay pot, which is broken in pieces.

**v12 – How did Judah trust in oppression and perversity (depended on deceit, NIV)?**

Any way that is not God’s way leads to oppression.

John 8:34 – *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.*

Not wanting to know the truth is perverse and it also leads to bondage...

John 8:32 – *you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*

### **How does the truth make us free?**

Jesus Christ personifies the truth about God. Knowing Him sets us free from the greatest consequence of sin, separation from Him in the lake of fire. It is also a prerequisite for sanctification which avoids the consequences of sin in this world.

### **v15 – What promise did God make to Judah here?**

*In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength:* God offered to Judah the promise of protection from Assyria. They didn't need to look to Egypt to help at all. They could have trusted God for His promise.

### **How could Judah experience God's deliverance from Assyria?**

By trusting in God's promise which means returning to him (*repentance* NIV).

### **What is the principle here that applies to us today?**

If there is conspicuous disobedience in our lives, we must return to the LORD's ways. Outright disobedience is never consistent with real trust in God's promise. Returning also has the idea of drawing close to the LORD.

### **How is trusting in God's promise result in rest for us?**

When we trust God, we don't have to strive for ourselves. We don't have to run all about trying to protect ourselves. We have the best possible Protector in God.

- When we rest in God, it shows we are really trusting in His promise.

### **How is trusting God's promise characterized by quietness?**

You don't need to argue for your side when God is on your side. Be quiet before Him and before others. It shows that you really trust Him.

### **How does trusting God's promise lead to confidence?**

You aren't given to despair or fear because you trust God's promise. Knowing He will fulfill His promises puts our trust in Him rather than ourselves.

### **v16 – What would be the result of Judah's rejection of God's promise?**

*But you would not, and you said, "No, for we will flee on horses" — Therefore you shall flee:* Judah rejected God's promise, and trusted in horses and other such things instead, they would need to flee!

### **v17 – Instead of confidence in the Lord, what did Judah have?**

*One thousand shall flee at the threat of one:* Fear... This is a reversal of another promise:

Leviticus 26:8 – *Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.*

It is also a fulfillment of the related curse:

Leviticus 26:17 – *I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.*

### **Isaiah 30:18-26 – God Will Be Gracious**

<sup>18</sup> *Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!* <sup>19</sup> *People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you.* <sup>20</sup> *Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.* <sup>21</sup> *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."* <sup>22</sup> *Then you will desecrate your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"*

<sup>23</sup> *He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows.* <sup>24</sup> *The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel.* <sup>25</sup> *In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill.* <sup>26</sup> *The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.*

### **v8 – Why would the Lord wait?**

*Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you:* We often wonder why the LORD waits to do things in our lives... out of His grace. Whenever the LORD waits or seems to delay, it always has a loving purpose behind it.

- We can trust that even when we don't understand it.

### **How would God be exalted?**

*And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you:* When God has mercy on us, it exalts Him. Mercy does nothing to exalt the person who receives it; mercy recognizes the guilt of the one who deserves the punishment. But mercy exalts the goodness of the person who gives it.

### **How is justice related to mercy?**

*For the LORD is a God of justice:* On the surface, mercy and justice seem to oppose each other. If some guilty criminal stands before the judge, he has the choice to show either mercy or justice. But God is so great, He can show both at the same time.

### **How did God demonstrate mercy and justice at the cross?**

Jesus took the punishment we deserve thus satisfying God's justice. At the same time, God shows mercy by extending the work of Jesus to us as payment for our sins.

- Only God can reconcile mercy and justice, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

### **How does it benefit us to wait on the Lord?**

*Blessed are all those who wait for Him:* Because God is so great, there is a built-in blessing for those who wait for Him.

- Isaiah doesn't mean wait just in the sense of passing time but in the sense of patiently waiting for and trusting God's promise.

### **How do people fail to wait on the Lord?**

- During times of difficulty and being eager for immediate rescue, they like children snatch at unripe fruit.
- If in poverty and in haste to be rich, they shall not long be innocent.
- If under reproach, their heart ferments towards revenge.

### **v19 – Why would Jerusalem inhabitants weep no more?**

*He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry:* When God's people wait on Him and trust His promise, God pours out His grace at the cry of their heart. Even if it feels God is distant, He hears and promises to answer.

- This for Israel is specifically fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

### **v20 – What is the bread of adversity and the water of affliction?**

When Judah was prosperous and comfortable, they wouldn't listen to God. So, God gave them the bread of adversity and water of affliction to get them to turn back to Him.

- It's always better to be uncomfortable and in tune with the Lord than to be comfortable and out of step with Him.

### **v21 – What is this voice wanting us to turn one way or the other?**

Most thoughts we have are our own though the Holy Spirit can speak to our human spirits and fallen angels can plant thought in our hearts (un-resurrected souls)...

*Acts 5:3 – But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?"*

### **How do we know to which voice to listen?**

We can distinguish between thoughts from the Holy Spirit and our own brilliant ideas or even demonic temptations with Scripture which authenticates what is of God.

### **v22 – What would the people of Judah do when they return to the Lord?**

*You will also defile the covering of your images of silver:*

The people of Judah kept household idols that they used to honor or worship other gods. The LORD promises a day when they will defile those images and throw them away as an unclean thing.

*You will throw them away as an unclean thing:* The literal Hebrew for unclean thing is literally a menstrual cloth. The people of God would come to hate their idols so much that they would throw them away as readily as they would throw away a used menstrual cloth

### **v23 – How would the Lord bless the people of Judah when they return to Him?**

*Then He will give the rain for your seed:* When Judah puts away their idols, boldly trusting God's promise, then God will send material blessings on Judah. For an agrarian economy, it was a wonderful promise to make them prosperous.

### **v24 – What is the significance of cured fodder for the livestock?**

There would be sufficient surplus of agricultural products that their food would be supplemented with stored feed. This would contribute to their food supply security getting them through times of shortage.

**v25 – What is *the day of great slaughter* in the time-frame of Judah returning to the Lord?**

This has to be a reference to the Tribulation when there will be a time of serious precipitation during the final bowl judgment...

Revelation 16:21 – *And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.*

The towers falling here is probably both literal because of the great earthquake that happens at the same time and symbolic, the human governments will fail.

**v26 – When would the sun be sevenfold?**

Also during the Tribulation the fourth bowl judgment...

Revelation 16:8 – *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.*

**Despite the trials of the Tribulation, what is the blessing for Judah?**

*In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people and heals the stroke of their wound:* Their reproach as a nation for not recognizing the Messiah will be healed. Israel will experience all the blessings promised by the Lord during the Millennial Kingdom which follows the Tribulation.

**What applications come to mind from our discussion?**

- We always get into trouble when we seek to do things in our own power without the Lord.
- Having no regard for the Lord is rebellion and this does not end well for those who persist in it.
- Disobeying God displays a lack of trust in Him.
- Returning to the Lord is drawing close to Him.
- Only God can be both merciful and just.
- Waiting on the Lord is always the right thing to do.