

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 30 - 32

4/9/14

Chapter 30 Study Notes

1 "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; 2 who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh's protection, to Egypt's shade for refuge. 3 But Pharaoh's protection will be to your shame, Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace. 4 Though they have officials in Zoan and their envoys have arrived in Hanes, 5 everyone will be put to shame because of a people useless to them, who bring neither help nor advantage, but only shame and disgrace." 6 An oracle 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, 7 to Egypt, whose help is utterly useless. Therefore I call her Rahab the Do-Nothing. 8 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. 9 These are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD's instruction. 10 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. 11 Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!" 12 Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, 13 this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. 14 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." 15 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. 16 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! 17 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." 18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! 19 O 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. 20 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. 21 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." 22 Then you will defile 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!" 23 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. 24 The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel. 25 In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. 26 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. 27 See, the Name of the LORD comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; his lips are full of wrath, and his tongue is a consuming fire. 28 His breath is like a rushing torrent, rising up to the neck. He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction; he places in the jaws of the peoples a bit that leads them astray. 29 And you will sing as on the night you celebrate a holy festival; your hearts will

rejoice as when people go up with flutes to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. **30** The LORD will cause men to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail. **31** The voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria; with his scepter he will strike them down. **32** Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing rod will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm. **33** Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze.

30:1 The obstinate children are the people of Judah (see 1:2), those who have rebelled against God. The negotiations for an alliance were underway, and Isaiah condemned their twisted plans. The people of Judah sought advice from everyone but God. When we are driven by fear, we tend to search everywhere for comfort, advice, and relief, hoping to find an easy way out of our troubles. Instead, we should consult God. Although he gives emergency help in a crisis, he prefers to be our Guide throughout our lives. By reading his Word and actively seeking to do his will, we can maintain our bond with him who provides stability no matter what the crisis.

30:6 This prophecy was given concerning "the animals of the Negev." The message is actually directed toward the messengers who carried bribes to Egypt. On their way, they would have had to pass through the wilderness region of the Negev, which lies between Judah and Egypt.

30:7 Rahab was a mythological female sea monster associated with Leviathan . It was a name associated with Egypt, where hippopotamuses, perhaps a likeness to Rahab, sat on the Nile River and did nothing.

30:10-11 Some people in Judah may have sought refuge in Egypt. In their desire to find security, they wanted to hear only good news. They did not welcome the truth from God's prophets. Often the truth makes us uncomfortable. We prefer lies and illusions when they make us feel more secure. It is much better to face reality than to live a lie. Don't settle for something that makes you feel comfortable but is not true.

30:15 God warned Judah that turning to Egypt and other nations for military might could not save them. Only God could do that. They must wait for him in "quietness and trust." No amount of fast talking or hasty activity could speed up God's grand design. We have nothing to say to God but thank you. Salvation comes from God alone. Because he has saved us, we can trust him and be peacefully confident that he will give us strength to face our difficulties. We should lay aside our busy care and endless effort and allow him to act.

30:20 The Lord gave his people adversity for food and suffering for drink, but he promised to be with them, teach them, and guide them during hard times. God expects a lot from us, and many times following him can be painful; but he always acts out of his love for us. The next time you go through a difficult time, try to appreciate the experience and grow from it, learning what God wants to teach you. God may be showing you his love by patiently walking with you through adversity.

30:21 When the people of Jerusalem left God's path, he would correct them. He will do the same for us. But when we hear his voice of correction, we must be willing to follow it!

30:27 The judgment of God will be accompanied by thick, rising smoke and words that consume like fire (see 33:14; Luke 12:49; Hebrews 12:29). People who were brought up in a church but dropped out often complain about the preaching of the wrath of God.

Yet God's wrath and anger are very real and are designed for the rebellious and for those who hate him, not for those who are humble and love him. Are you one of God's people? Help others discover God's love so that his wrath will never be an issue for them.

Chapter 31 Study Notes

Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt - Verses 1-9

1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD. 2 Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster; he does not take back his words. He will rise up against the house of the wicked, against those who help evildoers. 3 But the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, he who helps will stumble, he who is helped will fall; both will perish together. 4 This is what the LORD says to me: "As a lion growls, a great lion over his prey-- and though a whole band of shepherds is called together against him, he is not frightened by their shouts or disturbed by their clamor-- so the LORD Almighty will come down to do battle on Mount Zion and on its heights. 5 Like birds hovering overhead, the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will 'pass over' it and will rescue it." 6 Return to him you have so greatly revolted against, O Israelites. 7 For in that day every one of you will reject the idols of silver and gold your sinful hands have made. 8 "Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man; a sword, not of mortals, will devour them. They will flee before the sword and their young men will be put to forced labor. 9 Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic," declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

31:1 It was wrong for Judah to look to other nations for military help. (1) They were trusting in human beings instead of God. Judah sought protection from those who were powerless compared to God. Both Egypt and Judah would fall as a result of their arrogance. (2) They were serving their own interests instead of God's, and thus they did not even consult him. They violated God's stipulation in Deuteronomy 17:16. (3) They did not want to pay the price of looking to God and repenting of their sinful ways. When we have problems, it is good to seek help, but we must never bypass God or his previous directions to us.

31:7 Someday these people would throw their idols away, recognizing that they were nothing but human-made objects. Idols such as money, fame, or success are seductive. Instead of contributing to our spiritual development, they rob us of our time, energy, and devotion that ought to be directed toward God. At first our idols seem exciting and promise to take us places, but in the end we will find that we have become their slaves. We need to recognize their worthlessness now, before they rob us of our freedom.

Chapter 32 Study Notes

The Kingdom of Righteousness - Verses 1-8

1 See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. 2 Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. 3 Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. 4 The mind of the rash will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear. 5 No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected. 6 For the fool speaks folly, his mind is busy with evil:

He practices ungodliness and spreads error concerning the LORD; the hungry he leaves empty and from the thirsty he withholds water. 7 The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just. 8 But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.

32:1 Having suffered much injustice from evil rulers, many in Judah were hungry for a strong king who would rule with justice. This desire will be fulfilled when Christ reigns. Evil will be banished, and the King will reign in righteousness and rule with justice. In the immediate future, Judah would be destroyed and taken into captivity. But one day, God's Son, a King unlike any other king, will reign in righteousness and rule with justice.

32:5-6 When the righteous King comes, people's motives will become transparent. Fools will not be regarded as noble heroes. Those who have opposed God's standards of living will be unable to maintain their deception. In the blazing light of the holy Savior, sin cannot disguise itself and appear good. Christ's revealing light shines into the darkest corners of our hearts, showing sin clearly for what it is. When King Jesus reigns in your heart, there is no place for sin, no matter how well hidden you may think it is.

The Women of Jerusalem - Verses 9-20

9 You women who are so complacent, rise up and listen to me; you daughters who feel secure, hear what I have to say! 10 In little more than a year you who feel secure will tremble; the grape harvest will fail, and the harvest of fruit will not come. 11 Tremble, you complacent women; shudder, you daughters who feel secure! Strip off your clothes, put sackcloth around your waists. 12 Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines 13 and for the land of my people, a land overgrown with thorns and briars-- yes, mourn for all houses of merriment and for this city of revelry. 14 The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, 15 till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest. 16 Justice will dwell in the desert and righteousness live in the fertile field. 17 The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. 18 My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. 19 Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, 20 how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.

32:9-13 The people turned their backs on God and concentrated on their own pleasures. This warning is not just to the women of Jerusalem (see 3:16-4:1), but to all who sit back in their thoughtless complacency, enjoying crops, clothes, land, and cities while an enemy approaches. Wealth and luxury bring false security, lulling us into thinking all is well when disaster is around the corner. By abandoning God's purpose for our lives, we also abandon his help.

32:15-17 God acts from above to change people's condition here on earth. Only when God's Spirit is among us can we achieve true peace and fruitfulness (Ezekiel 36:22-38; Galatians 5:22-23). This will happen in the end times. We can also have God's Spirit with us now, for he is available to all believers through Christ (John 15:26). But the outpouring mentioned here happens when the worldwide kingdom of God is established for all eternity (see Joel 2:28-29).