

**Is. 31:1** Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are many*; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

After taking the time to explain that God will defeat His enemies in the end, Isaiah returns to warning the people against turning to Egypt for help, for depending on the strength of horses and chariots in great number. Though it may appear as a powerful fighting force from earthly standards, it in no way compares to the strength and power of God. The Holy One of Israel, the One they don't want to hear about any more (cf 30:10-11), is the One they should look to for deliverance. In God's eyes their rebellion against Him is foolishness.

*Jeremiah 4:22* For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

**Is. 31:2** Yet he also *is* wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

"he" = God, the Holy One of Israel, the LORD, YHWH

"Also" is not in the original Hebrew. There is no comparison between man's so called wisdom and the wisdom of God, who is the source of all wisdom. Man can only begin to have wisdom through the fear of the Lord.

*Psalms 111:10* The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom....

In His wisdom, God is going to bring about evil in the form of judgment against the sin of His people. The scripture affirms that God isn't wishy washy in His judgments. What He speaks will come to pass.

*Numbers 23:19* God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

"the house of evildoers" – I believe this is referring to the rebellious children of Judah.

"the help" – the Egyptians

"them that work iniquity" – Another reference to God's disobedient people.

When God judges His people, He is also going to judge those that assist them in their disobedience.

That truth gives a great word of warning regarding our own actions toward others. I immediately make application as a parent/grandparent. My actions

should in no way encourage my children to follow the ways of the world. They should in every way reflect that God is Lord in my life. It seems to me that the example we set is much more powerful than the words we say, and sometimes we as parents forget that. God will hold us accountable for that example.

**Is. 31:3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.**

Isaiah is stating the truth that there is a vast difference between the strength of men and horses (the creation) and the strength of God (the Creator). Man is always fixated on what He can see. God's spirit is invisible, but the effects of the power of that Spirit are clearly visible. The Hebrew for the word *spirit* references wind, and John uses that comparison to make application to the life of the believer.

*John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

God's stretched out hand is again a symbol of His judgment that Isaiah has used several times in his message to the people.

*Isaiah 5:25 .... For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

*Isaiah 9:12 .... For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

*Isaiah 10:4 .... For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

Again, Isaiah states the truth that both God's disobedient children, as well as the ones who assist them in their disobedience, will be thrown down in judgment and defeat.

**Is. 31:4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, *he* will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.**

Isaiah is always careful to remind the people that his message should be heeded because it is from the Lord; it is not just Isaiah's own thoughts.

In looking for verses that compare God to a lion I thought Hosea 5:14 was quite interesting because of the similar wording.

*For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.*

I was already trying to figure out why the Lord would compare Himself to a lion, and then emphasize a young lion. Maybe this is an emphasis on the strength of His action compared to that of a young lion in its prime. The main point seems to be that just as a lion fiercely guards its prey and will warn any possible intruders of the danger they face if they get too close, just as fiercely will the Lord fight for His people and his holy mountain. Just as the lion would not be frightened away at the sound of many shepherds, neither will the Lord be caused to turn aside from His purpose. And make no mistake about it—God will accomplish His purposes for His people and His land. God as the Lion will cause His enemy to fear.

*Hosea 11:10 They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.*

*Amos 3:8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?*

**Is. 31:5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.**

The Hebrew for the word *flying* has a primary meaning of giving cover. That meaning fits in with the point Isaiah is making. He is comparing the Lord's defense of Jerusalem to that of a bird defending its nest and protecting its young. There is no question of the outcome of that defense; the Lord will prevail. Jerusalem will be delivered / saved.

“passing over” – In the context of comparison to a bird, this seems to picture outstretched wings of protection. This thought was shared by the Psalmist.

*Psalm 36:7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

*Psalm 57:1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.*

*Psalm 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

**Is. 31:6 Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.**

**Is. 31:7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.**

“Turn ye” – Turn back, repent

To whom? To the One against whom the children of Israel have turned away in apostasy of their faith—the Holy One of Israel, the LORD.

It's like Isaiah is saying that your actions will prove your repentance. Repent and prove it. Throw away your idols of silver and gold—idols that your own hands have made in disobedience and rejection of God.

How foolish! To trust in idols of your own making as a god. Isaiah talks about this in a later chapter.

*Isaiah 44:14-20* He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

**Is. 31:8** Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

**Is. 31:9** And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

“Then” = When the people of God repent

The Assyrians were God's instrument of judgment against Israel, and the Babylonians were God's main instrument of judgment against Judah. Again, I think the prophecy definitely jumps to end times.

The scripture tells us that the Lord will return as King only when His people are ready to repent and say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

*Matthew 23:39* For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

As discussed in the previous chapter, God's weapon of destruction will be the sword that proceeds from His mouth. It won't be the sword of man that defeats the Assyrian, the Antichrist; it will be God's sword. He and His armies will be terrified at the appearance of the King of kings, but there will be no escape.

The Hebrew for *fire* references a region of light; *furnace* references an oven or furnace capable of high temperatures for melting metal or making pottery as a source of light. God's presence in Jerusalem during the time of His kingdom is associated with great light (cf 30:26). He will inspire fear, either of awe or terror—awe to His people and terror to His enemies.