

## Woe #5—A Rebuke of Carnal Reliance

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### Isaiah 31

**Isaiah 31** begins like Isaiah 30—The futility of trusting Egypt instead of believing God. Since Judah rejected God’s first “*woe*” (Isa. 30), God repeats it in Isaiah 31. To reemphasize this “*woe*” shows God’s extreme displeasure of leaning on natural means instead of trust God Himself.

#### I. **Judah’s carnal RELIANCE** (31:1-4).

➡ “*Woe to them that go **DOWN** to Egypt for help...*” (v. 1). Seeking help from the world is always a step **DOWN** from God.

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When Abraham arrived in Canaan from Ur of the Chaldees, there was a famine. Abraham was exactly where God lead him. But, he made the mistake of going down to Egypt for help (Gen. 12:10). The famine was a test to see if Abraham would trust God or seek the help of man. He failed the test. Abraham trusted God to lead him over 500 miles to Canaan, but failed trust God once he got there. One preacher calls this “*the inevitable test.*” At some time or another we will all be tested this way. Some Christians are like Abraham—They trust God to get them to heaven, but don’t trust Him to meet their daily needs on earth.

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#### A. The **SUPERIORITY** of God’s deliverance.

##### 1. God’s superior **wisdom**. Verse 2—“*Yet he also is wise...*”

Isaiah is comparing Judah’s choice of seeking Egypt’s help over God’s.

a) Humanly speaking, seeking the help of Egypt appeared to be a wise decision. Egypt was famous for it’s horses and chariots. Also, Assyria was the common enemy of Judah and Egypt. But it was purely a fleshly decision. God was not even considered! God’s ways are wiser than man’s ways (1 Cor. 1:25).

- It was as if Isaiah was saying, “You think you are wise in making an alliance with Egypt. Well, God is also wise!”
- Many make the mistake of trusting human wisdom above God’s help. How insulting to God to put more

trust in human power over looking to “*the Holy One of Israel*” for help!

b) Man looks at things with the physical eye instead of the eye of faith (v. 3). Horses of flesh vs. horses of spirit (2 Kings 6:14-17; Rev. 19:11-14).

- The flesh is no match to the power of God’s Spirit. “*The flesh is weak*” (Mt. 26:41; Rom. 8:3). Zechariah 4:6—“*Not by might, nor by power, but **by my spirit**, saith the Lord of hosts.*” Jesus said, “*It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.*” Paul said we should “*have no confidence in the flesh*” (Phil 3:3). As we sing, “The arm of flesh will fail you; Ye dare not trust your own!”

2. God’s steadfast **resolution**. Man may retract something he said, but not God. God “*will not call back his words*” (v. 2; Num. 23:19—“*...hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*”). When God says He will bring affliction against evildoers, He will do it (See Isaiah 55:11)!

B. The SIMILITUDES of God’s deliverance (vs. 4-5).

- vs. 4-5—*Historically*, Isaiah 31 speaks of the Lord destroying Sennacherib (“*the Assyrian*”) and his army (see Isaiah 36-39). However, this chapter also applies *prophetically* to Jesus *coming down* from heaven to destroy the armies of the antiChrist at His second advent (v. 4; cf. 30:30; Micah 1:3).
- God’s defense of Jerusalem is likened to—
  1. A roaring LION (v. 4). The Lord will “*come down*” from heaven as the Lion of Judah and the armies of antichrist will be destroyed. He is fearless against the clamor of men.
  2. A soaring BIRDS (v. 5). As a flock of flying birds “*passing over,*” God will defend and protect Jerusalem from the sky.

- It has been suggested these “*birds flying*” may be a reference to God using a squadron aircraft to defend Jerusalem.

## II. **God’s call to REPENTANCE** (31:6-7).

- Two elements of Biblical repentance: It involves a “change of mind” or a turning to one thing from another thing (cf. Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9).
  - A. TURNING to God (v. 6 cf. 30:15).
  - B. TURNING from idols (v. 7; Ezek 14:6). When Jesus comes again, the idol making business will go bankrupt.
    - Historically, this was fulfilled when Hezekiah removed the high places, broke the idols, and cut down the groves (2 Kings 18:4).

**SUMMATION** (verses 8-9): Isaiah is telling Jerusalem that it will not be a sword wielded by some man that will kill Sennacherib. No human sword will defeat him. His army will be destroyed by the sword of God’s angel (cf. 2 Kings 19:34-37).

The prophetic fulfillment will be the ultimate defeat of the antichrist (“*the Assyrian*”) at Christ’s second coming (30:30; Rev. 19:15; 2 Thess. 2:8).

➤ Isaiah 32 will continue with the **REIGN OF CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS** (next lesson).