

“Snotty Brats”

Isaiah 30:1-33

Sunday, December 11th, 2022

Children - *Do you collect certain things?* I know people who collect **snowmen, angels, and bunnies**. Another I know collects **decorative napkins**, and another collects **ceramic frogs**.

When I was young, I collected rocks. I also collected baseball cards, football cards, and comic books. **(SLIDE)** I don't have this card, but it is one of the rarest baseball cards. It was printed in the year 1910. **It is the rookie card for a ballplayer named Honus Wagner**. It was sold at auction earlier this year... for \$7.25 million dollars!

If you looked in my study here at the church, you'd think I collect books there are so many there. For a time as a kid, I also collected stamps.

One of the most famous and expensive stamps was one called **the Inverted Jenny**. It is a 24 cent US stamp, and a few sheets of these stamps were printed with the airplane upside down. Each of those stamps is worth \$100,000!

The reason I mentioned stamp collecting, though, has to do with today's sermon from the Old Testament book of **Isaiah**. There, the people of Judah had a treaty, (an agreement) that Egypt would protect Judah from another country named Assyria.

In my stamp collection, I had several stamps that said 'NATO' and 'SEATO' **(SLIDES)**. Those are examples of agreements nations have with other nations to protect each other. God was upset with His people for trusting more in the nations they had agreements with, than God who created them! Let's pray that we trust God and believe He can deal with our problems.

Pray. You are a problem solving God. We often turn to anything or anyone before we turn to you. *Why do we do that?* Help us rise above our sin, and become men, women, and children of strong faith. Help us to trust You even when we don't understand You. We love You in Jesus' name, Amen.

Our day is much like Isaiah's was. There are people in the fellowship of the church who don't want to hear the truth. They want preachers who tell them stories instead of proclaiming the Word. They want classes dealing with social issues instead of sound doctrine. They prefer lies rather than the truth of the Bible. It seems they love their sin more than they love God, and they no longer want to be convicted of their sin by hearing good preaching. Some people need to be warned, just as the Jews were warned and just as the people in Paul's day were warned. Those who turn away from the Word of God and seek security in the world will not escape His judgment.

This is what we find happening in the 30th chapter of Isaiah. Those in Judah were stubborn children with their own plans. They didn't want to live the life of faith required by God in His Word; they wanted to live without the shackles of God's proclamations through His prophets as they saw them.

As we look at this chapter broadly, we see God, through Isaiah, addressing three different nations in three different subsections. As he does that, we see how ineffective these three nations are at pleasing a holy God and bringing any kind of long term assistance to their troubles.

- **Egypt a reproach to God** (verses 1-7);
- **Judah the rebellious people of God** (verses 9-14);
- **Assyria the reprobate enemy of God** (verses 27-33).
- **Judah the restored people of God** (verses 18-19, 23-26)

Isaiah 30:1-7:

““Woe to the rebellious children,” says the Lord, “Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin;

2 - Who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

3 - Therefore the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be *your* humiliation.

4 - For his princes were at Zoan (a city in the Nile delta, Egypt’s capital at the time), and his ambassadors came to Hanes (a city 50 miles south of Cairo).

5 - They were all ashamed of a people *who* could not benefit them, or be help or benefit, but a shame and also a reproach.”

6 - The burden against the beasts of the South. Through a land of trouble and anguish, from which *came* the lioness and lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels, to a people *who* shall not profit;

7 - For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose. Therefore I have called her Rahab-Hem-Shebeth (which means ‘Rahab sits idle.’)

Verse 1 begins with the fourth use in this section of the book of Isaiah (**Chaps 28-35 - Judgment and Salvation**) of the term “woe,” (perhaps the version of the Bible you’re reading from has “Ho.”) It is a summons to judgment. The mention of “rebellious children” in verse 1 (mentioned again in verse 9) referred to God’s people, Judah! They were an obstinate people, stubborn children; “Snotty brats” as the Dietmeier version puts it.

The remainder of verse 1 is the theme of this **30th chapter of Isaiah**. “...Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,” We’ll come back to that in a moment.

Where verse 1 describes Judah, verses 2-7 describe Egypt. The people of Judah thought they could rely upon Egypt to protect them from Assyria. Egypt was the place of death for Judah, they were enslaved by Pharaoh and driven hard by him; not the place for Judah to expect help! Egypt was long past its prime at this point. Isaiah described Egypt as a **shame** and a **reproach** (disappointment) in verse 5, and a people who shall not profit in verse 6. Isaiah gives them a nickname in verse 7 -

Rahab-Hem-Shebeth. “Rahab” was another name for “Egypt,” and it means, “*Rahab, who does nothing...Egypt who does nothing.*”

It's important we realize that It was not wrong for Judah to seek assistance from others. Nor is it wrong for us to seek assistance from others. We can't do everything. Where Judah went wrong was in seeking help without turning to the Lord and first seeking His guidance.

Application: *When have you done the same thing? You know, needing help with a concern, but not first committing it to prayer with the Lord, and seeking His counsel in His word?* It is likely every one of us has done this. I have, more than once.

There's the guy who is struggling with emotional distress, who seeks relief from a doctor or counselor without first seeking God for relief. *What purpose might He (God) have in mind for this taking place? Does it make the man reflect upon how He might need to amend His thinking or living?* In all my experience as a counselor of God's Word, and the knowledge I've gained through the struggles I've had in my own life, I've found an unbeatable pair is addressing the distress by internalizing God's Word, and also seeking medical assistance, as needed.

Or there's the young woman who is presented with a new possibility for employment that would likely mean a move away from her current life, and she is seeking God's will...well after she'd decided to accept the job because it offered better pay and benefits. Applying this principle of seeking God first in His Word, the Bible, to her situation, *did she look for a church to join which supported her theology before accepting the job?* Only a few professing believers take into consideration that God may be leading them to a new location, or to remain in their current situation, because of the giftings God has given them for His Church.

So Egypt was no real help to Judah whatsoever because it was a reproach to God. We now take up **Judah the rebellious people of God** (verses 9-14):

9 - “...this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *who* will not hear the law of the Lord;

10 - Who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

11 - Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.”

12 - Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel: ‘Because you despise this word, and trust in oppression and perversity, and rely on them,

13 - Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.

14 - “And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water from the cistern.”

- Judah is described again as a rebellious people. They are *lying* children; children who will not hear the law of the Lord;
- They instruct their seers not to see, and their prophets to not prophesy rightly;
- They want people to stop bringing the Holy One of Israel into every situation and conversation! Verse 11 reveals their ways, “Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us!” “What they wanted was not an end to preaching. What they wanted was preaching that would agree with their preconceptions and not ruffle their feathers.” (Ortlund, 173) *Is that what you want Trinity Church?*
- The bulging wall falling in verses 13 & 14 would one day result in the abrupt collapse of Judah’s world.

We’ll come back to Judah; but for now, we’ll jump ahead to verses 27-33 where we find again **Assyria the reprobate enemy of God**.

27 - “Behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar, burning *with* His anger, and *His* burden is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue like a devouring fire.

28 - His breath is like an overflowing stream, which reaches up to the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of futility; and *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing *them* to err.

29 - You shall have a song as in the night *when* a holy festival is kept, and gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel.

30 - The Lord will cause His glorious voice to be heard, and show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of *His* anger and the flame of a devouring fire, *with* scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

31 - For through the voice of the Lord Assyria will be beaten down, *as* He strikes with the rod.

32 - and *in* every place where the staff of punishment passes, which the Lord lays on him, *it* will be with tambourines and harps; and in battles of brandishing He will fight with it.

33 - For Tophet was established of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made *it* deep and large; its pyre *is* fire with much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.”

Assyria was a nation mighty in wealth and in military strength. The Assyrians knew that, and so did most of the nations around it. God knew what they thought of themselves, too. But He would no longer put up with their foolishness. With a great fury, as verses 27, 28, 30-32 describe, God will crush Assyria to fine powder. Topheth (mentioned in verse 33) was a site outside Jerusalem where the worshipers of Molech sacrificed their children.

Finally, back to Judah. Our final point is **Judah the restored people of God** (verses 18-19). Here’s verse 18:

18 - Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord *is* a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him."

Because the leaders of Judah refused to wait on God, God must wait for them. Think of the waiting of the Prodigal Son's father. The result of his waiting for his son is in **Luke's gospel account chapter 15, verse 20**, "But when (the son) was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." Just as the father's grace to the returned prodigal is extravagant in the parable (robe, ring and fatted calf) so is the Lord's grace to the rebels of Judah here as soon as they cry out to the Lord. That may be *you*, friend; what *you're* experiencing!

Verse **19** - "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you."

Doesn't this just fill your sails? Though we deserve nothing good from God, He always graciously responds to us with promises of no bitter tears, responding to us when we cry much like the parents of a newborn infant. And when He hears us, He will answer. That is hope! That is grace! That is love!

We can apply this text more. Answer for a bit of self-evaluation.

- *What (who) do you put your hope in when you are in trouble?*
- *Is it in the Person of God?*
- *Is it physical possessions? A better spouse? Better civic leaders?*
- *Or is it in the name of the Lord, in the power of the invisible God who proclaimed His will in the Scriptures?*

Like Judah, our only hope is to **repent, return** to the Lord, and by faith **rest** only in Him.

Taking this one step further, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you about the false saviors you're presently allied with. Be honest with Him, break those alliances, and lean on Jesus, and Him alone.

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