**Rahab-Hem-Shebeth – Trusting in Idle Help**

*Isaiah 30:1-7*

**Introduction**

1. God always promised His chosen nation He would protect them if they remained faithful to Him, and trusted in Him for such protection – **Leviticus 25:18** (dwell in safety); **Leviticus 26:7-8** (victory over enemies regardless of number); **Deuteronomy 6:1-3** (days prolonged, multiply greatly**); Deuteronomy 12:10** (rest from enemies); **Deuteronomy 28:7** (enemies will be caused to be defeated by the Lord)
2. After Assyria besieged and took Samaria, laying the final blow to the northern part of the divided kingdom (Israel), carrying them into captivity, Sennacherib king of Assyria turned his eyes to the southern kingdom of Judah (**cf. 2 Kings 17, 18**).
3. Israel trusted in pagan nations for protection instead of the Lord (**cf. 2 Kings 17:4)** and were carried away into Assyrian captivity.
4. Judah did not learn from the mistakes of Israel, but trusted in Egypt for protection against Assyria instead of God – **Isaiah 30:1-7**
   1. Isaiah prophesies of the faithless turn to Egypt, and its ultimate folly and shame.
   2. **(vv. 1-5)** – The rebellious Israelites of the southern nation of Judah sought refuge in Egypt but would ultimately be ashamed by her.
      1. (**v. 3)** – strength of Pharaoh.
         1. **Isaiah 31:1** – horses, chariots, horsemen – i.e. physical strength.
      2. **(v. 4)** – i.e. the political leaders in Judah went to two cities of Egypt to seek aid.
   3. **(vv. 6-7)** – A caravan was sent from Judah down through the dangerous desert to Egypt with treasures to curry the favor and protection of that nation.
      1. **(v. 7)** – Egypt offered false hope to Judah against Assyrian advancement.
   4. Ultimately, Egypt would not be able to help against Assyria, and Isaiah’s prophecy rang true:
      1. **2 Kings 18:13** – Sennacherib took the fortified cities of Judah (save Jerusalem which he surrounded).
         1. “I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered [them]…I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female…Hezekiah himself I made prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.” (Sennacherib’s account inscribed on his clay prism)
      2. Having surrounded Jerusalem, Sennacherib sent representatives to taunt and mock Hezekiah and Jerusalem.
         1. Even Sennacherib noted the folly of trusting in Egypt – **2 Kings 18:19-21** (“Rabshakeh” – title for Assyrian official)
         2. Truly, Egypt was of no help, and would be of no help going forward.
      3. Knowing that their only hope was in the Lord, the pious king Hezekiah turned to God in fervent prayer (**cf. 2 Kings 19**).
      4. The Lord was not ready for the ultimate punishment of the southern nation of Judah yet, and gave them deliverance from Assyria.
         1. This deliverance drove home the point that their trust should never be in the flesh, but in the Lord **– Isaiah 31:3, 8-9**
         2. Judah was delivered from Assyrian threat by the Lord’s direct, miraculous intervention – **Isaiah 37:36-38**
         3. Rightly, David said – **Psalm 20:7** – this we should remember.
5. **Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11** – these things are recorded for us to learn from.
6. **Isaiah 30:7** – the Lord called Egypt in whom Judah trusted, “Rahab-Hem-Shebeth” which is an object lesson for us to remember.
   1. ***“Rahab that sitteth still” (ASV); “Their strength is to sit still.” (KJV)***
   2. ***Rahab Sits Idle***
   3. Rahab – an epithet of Egypt – “pride, blusterer” (Brown-Driver-Briggs)
   4. Shebeth – šeḇeṯ; from 7673; rest, interruption, cessation. (STRONG)
   5. “The noun “Rahab” indicates ferocity, haughtiness, boasting, insolence; and the name was doubtless given to Egypt on account of its insolence and pride. It is used here because Egypt would be full of self-confidence, and would boast that she could aid the suppliant Jews, and deliver them from the threatened invasion. The phrase rendered ‘to sit still,’ is a part of the name which the prophet gave to her. Though she boasted, yet would she sit still; she would be inefficient, and would do nothing; and the whole name, therefore, may be rendered, ‘I call her, the blusterer that sitteth still;’ that is, ‘they are courageous in talking; cowards in acting.’ (Taylor)” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible)
   6. Where was Egypt when Israel had trusted her for deliverance from Assyria? Where was Egypt when Judah was attacked, and 46 of her cities conquered by Assyria? Where would Egypt be when Assyria advanced on Jerusalem to finish the job?
   7. It was God, not any nation or people, that delivered Judah from destruction at the hands of the Assyrian nation.
7. It is when trouble befalls us that the Lord provides opportunity for our faith to show most.
8. We must make sure that we maintain our trust in God during such uncertain and troublesome times.
9. We must not trust in idle help like Israel who trusted in Egypt to resist Assyrian advances instead of God.
10. Politics
11. It is especially in times such as the election cycle that it becomes apparent that some Christians put too much stock into their politics.
    1. Some are so consumed with politics and the 24 hour news cycle that THEY CONFLATE SUCH WITH SPIRITUALITY. (Or at least treat it as equally important.)
       1. I.e. politics becomes more their religion, and religion becomes more their pastime.
    2. If their candidate or party loses there is a sense of worry and discontentment.
       1. It was their strong opinion that their candidate or party was the key component to a structured/stable life.
       2. Some act as though God is affiliated with a political party – more specifically their party.
          1. They begin to equate trust in God with trust in their political party/candidate.
    3. Some Christians act as though the cause of Christ is dependent on the political leanings of the country, and some act as though such is dependent on the country itself. (As if America is God’s country.)
    4. These are all foolish thoughts – politics, love of country, etc. is not the place we should put our trust.
12. The authorities are from God – **Romans 13:1-3** – they are meant by God to uphold His righteous ways in society.
    1. We are to pray for them to rule accordingly – **1 Timothy 2:1-2**
    2. This does not mean they are to be trusted.
       1. **Romans 13:7; 1 Peter 2:17** – honor the authorities, BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HONORING THE KING, AND PUTTING OUR FAITH IN HIM.
    3. SUCH WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCH IN ROME, AND UNDER SUCH AN EMPIRE WITHOUT THE FEAR OF GOD.
13. As Christians, our trust should not be in the state of the union, and its projection, but in the Lord.
    1. **Psalm 11:1-4** – David trusted in the Lord, not the failing foundations – the Lord remains in His temple.
14. We need to truly come to grasp the principle stated by Daniel to Belshazzar concerning Nebuchadnezzar – **Daniel 5:20-21**
    1. Demonstrated with God’s use of Assyria to discipline Israel – **Isaiah 10:5-12** (acting as though by her power she performed such, when in reality it was God who used her)
    2. Most times we think of this in regard to God preserving our nation for the good of His people.
    3. HOWEVER, WE NEED TO BE AT PEACE WITH THE THOUGHT OF SERVING GOD WITHOUT THE LUXURIES WE ENJOY – i.e. it may be that such freedoms as we know them are nearing their end.
    4. If we have always put our trust in God this will not destroy our faith – **Acts 8:4; 2 Timothy 2:9** – the early church was born in adversity and grew from such because God’s word is not chained.
15. Perhaps we get so caught up in the interest of our privileges in this country continuing that we forget Christ’s strength is made perfect in weakness – **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**
    1. We should be able to, in our spiritual maturity, see the potential good by the guidance of Christ in the disruption of what we might consider the ideal political environment.
    2. TRUST IN GOD IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANY OUTER CIRCUMSTANCES BUT IS THE VERY REASON FOR STABILITY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ARE PRONE TO CHANGE FOR BETTER OR WORSE.
16. Christ is the only constant, and we should only trust in Him.
17. Human Theology
18. Theology – the study of the nature of God and religious belief (New Oxford American Dictionary)
    1. Perhaps there is such a thing as sound theology.
    2. However, the bible never uses the term. Rather, it speaks of revelation – **1 Corinthians 2:11-12; Ephesians 3:3-4**
    3. “Theology” stands more as a term referring to the study of common perspectives of God throughout religious history. (Not necessarily correct views.)
       1. EX: Calvinism is a theological construct which is founded on what could be called “unsound theology.” (The sovereignty of God does not take away choice but is the very thing that created free-will.)
       2. “Human Theology” is a better way of describing such, for it is actually what some humans think about God, and NOT WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF.
19. Sadly, many members of the church, whether knowingly or not, have turned to human theology for security and comfort.
    1. Various materials from denominational perspectives and errors are consumed without hesitation, and without caution. (Commentaries, topical books, study bible notes, etc.)
    2. These materials are grounded on perspectives of God in error (often Calvinistic).
    3. These arguments and teachings, as they are unscriptural, hold no promise for fellowship with God and salvation.
20. Examples of human theology offering false security/comfort:
    1. A man can be saved without obedience to the gospel through baptism (hypothetical situations often offered as arguments).
       1. Reasoning – God is too loving and His grace too great to allow a good person to go to hell because they never heard the gospel or had a chance to obey it.
       2. Problem:
          1. The grace of God is only extended in the gospel – **Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11** – word of grace, grace teaches
          2. The love of God is universally extended, but its benefits are conditional – **John 3:16; Jude 20-21**
    2. A Christian will not lose his soul because of one unrepented sin.
       1. Reasoning – What kind of God would abandon His child based on one mistake.
       2. Problem:
          1. God has not and will not ever abandon anyone – **Isaiah 59:1-2** – we abandon Him!
          2. God is holy, which means He cannot have any relationship with any amount of sin – **1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 1:5**
          3. God is both just, and the justifier through Jesus’ blood, but ignoring even one sin that has not been washed by Jesus’ blood makes Him an unjust justifier without it – **Romans 3:24-26; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2; 5:16-17** (sin unrepented of and unconfessed is that which leads to death)
21. God is not like us – **Psalm 50:21**
22. His ways are higher than ours – **Isaiah 55:8-9**
23. Any ideas about God, and how He does, or would deal with man that are not grounded in His revelation, but rather the thoughts of man, ONLY BOASTS OF SECURITY AND COMFORT, BUT IN REALITY IS IDLE IN OFFERING IT.
24. Faith only comes by God’s word – **Romans 10:17**

**Conclusion**

1. We must learn from the people of Israel and Judah as they put their trust in a people that could not help instead of the almighty God.
2. When we place our trust in anyone or anything except God, we place our trust in idleness and impotency.