

THE REBELLIOUS CHILDREN OF GOD
Isa. 29:15; 30:1, 2; 31:1

Intro: It is in the second of these passages, the fourth in the series of woes, that God called His people, "rebellious." But see 30:9. The words are different in the original, but their meaning is essentially the same. It describes a person who refuses to take his proper place, as a disobedient son, or an unfaithful wife, or as a man against His God.

The prophecy of Isaiah begins and ends on this same note. Cf. 1:23 and 65:2.

Long before this time the will of God had been expressed through Samuel in his dealings with Saul concerning "rebellion." Cf. 1 Sam. 15:22, 23. This even proved to be the turning point in Saul's ministry, the time when God rejected him from being king over Israel. The Jews in Isaiah's day certainly knew this story!

Actually, rebellion always indicates some disobedience concerning the will of God. The will of God is set aside.

But one thing stands out in all three of these passages which we are considering. It is the overruling hand of God in bringing blessing to His people in spite of their rebellion.

Interestingly, the word rebellion, or rebel, is never used in the NT, but we do have many instances of rebellion in the NT. Since it involves a setting aside of the Word, cf. Matt. 15:1-9. And see Mark 7:13 on the same event, concluding with these words:

Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

This means that in many ways they were rebels.

In Isaiah's day God was moving against Israel because of her sin. The Assyrians were a threat to them because of what had happened, or would happen, to Israel. The natural thing for Judah to do was:

1) To consider her own resources, how she could stand against the enemy.

Or,

2) To establish some alliance with a foreign power which would be able to help them.

Our text shows how they sought to do both. And, in so doing, they were in rebellion against:

- 1) The purposes of God.
- 2) The promises of God.
- 3) The power of God.

Isaiah was to proclaim that none of these would succeed, but also

to call Judah back to living in obedience to the will and Word of God.

These are woes #3, 4, and 5 out of the six which Isaiah was directed to preach against them in this particular series. "Woe" is a lamentation and at the same time a threatening. Rebukes that are given in the right spirit must always be characterized by these two things: grief, and warning. Whenever we or anyone else stands against the Lord, it is time for a "woe" of alarm. Such action can never succeed.

I. THE "WOE" AGAINST SELF-TRUST (Isa. 29:15).

Note that the question, "Who seeth us"?, is the language of unregenerate men. It is the speech of those who do not know the Lord. Cf. Psa. 64:5; 94:7.

The word "counsel" figures largely into these woes, suggesting the use of human wisdom instead of the wisdom of God.

Verse 16 suggests that Judah has assumed the place of the potter, making the Lord the clay!

But the encouraging thing about this "woe" is to be seen in vv. 18-24. It was not only God's purpose to bring His people blessing, but it was still His purpose. However, it would come as a result of His doing, not theirs!

The purposes of God are not going to be accomplished even by the wisdom of the Lord's people who may want to follow the world, but by the Lord Himself!

II. THE "WOE" AGAINST RELYING UPON THE WISDOM OF OTHERS--THE WISDOM OF EGYPT (Isa. 30:1, 2).

It is because of passages like this that Egypt in Scripture is a type of the world.

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:4-16.

If we need wisdom, consult Jas. 1:5-8; 3:13-18.

What happens when a child of God walks in the wisdom of the world? See Isa. 30:3-5, 7.

What did Isaiah counsel the people to do? See 30:15 -- where he counseled them to return to the Lord and to His Word. Note the back ground in vv. 8-14.

But see a second part of Isaiah's counsel from the Lord in 30:18.

We need to trust the promises of God!

III. THE "WOE" AGAINST UPON THE FORCES OF EGYPT (Isa. 31:1).

We cannot trust in men and trust in the Lord at the same time. Verse 1 makes that clear. Cf. Psa. 20, esp. v. 7.

— Verse 3 gives us another reason for not trusting in men.

But verses 4 ff. give us the greatest reason. It is because the Lord by His power is perfectly sufficient to take care of His people and to meet all of their needs against whatever enemy might come against them.

Concl: Remember the purposes of God. Remember the promises of God. Remember the power of God.

Whenever there are troubles, we need to turn to the Lord. It may be that His judgment is upon us for some reason. Perhaps we have turned from Him. If so, our passages tonight make it clear that the Lord uses trouble to call us back.

If we have not been walking with Him, if we have slipped into a "life style" that is of the world, then we must forsake the ways of men and walk again according to the wisdom of God. We may even rebuke ourselves to begin with, as Rabshakeh rebuked the people of Judah (see Isa. 36:13 ff.) in Hezekiah's day, but the Word of God shall stand. Nothing that is contrary to the Word shall ever prosper.

Oh, how we need to love the Lord, to walk in His ways, and to trust Him to meet our needs. Thank God, not even our disobedience can nullify His promises, but it can keep us from the peace and joy that we should experience, and it robs Him of glory which rightfully belongs to Him. His purpose is good. Cf. Rom. 8:28. His promises are certain. God will not fail. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:13. His power is more than sufficient for all of our needs. Cf. Eph. 3:20, 21.