

CHAPTER 30

The prophecy of this chapter seems to relate (as that in the foregoing chapter) to the approaching danger of Jerusalem and desolations of Judah by Sennacherib's invasion. Here is,

I. A just reproof to those who, in that distress, trusted to the Egyptians for help, and were all in a hurry to fetch succors from Egypt (v. 1-7).

II. A terrible threatening against those who slighted the good advice which God by his prophets gave them for the repose of their minds in that distress, assuring them that whatever became of others the judgment would certainly overtake them (v. 8-17).

III. A gracious promise to those who trusted in God, that they should not only see through the trouble, but should see happy days after it, times of joy and reformation, plenty of the means of grace, and therewith plenty of outward good things and increasing joys and triumphs (v. 18-26), and many of these promises are very applicable to gospel grace.

IV. A prophecy of the total rout and ruin of the Assyrian army, which should be an occasion of great joy and an introduction to those happy times (v. 27-33).

ISA. 30: 1-7

It was often the fault and folly of the people of the Jews that, when they were insulted by their neighbours on one side, they sought for succour from their neighbours on the other side, instead of looking up to God and putting their confidence in him. Against the Israelites they sought to the Syrians, 2Ch. 16: 2, 3. Against the Syrians they sought to the Assyrians, 2Ki. 16: 7. Against the Assyrians they here sought to the Egyptians, and Rabshakeh upbraided them with so doing, 2Ki. 18:21. Now observe here,

I. How this sin of theirs is described, and what there was in it that was provoking to God. When they saw themselves in danger and distress,

1. They would not consult God. They would do things of their own heads, and not advise with God, though they had a ready and certain way of doing it by Urim or prophets. They were so confident of the prudence of their own measures that they thought it needless to consult the oracle; nay, they were not willing to put it to that issue: "They *take counsel* among themselves, and one from another; but they do not ask counsel, much less will they take counsel, of me. They *cover with a covering*" (they think to secure themselves with one shelter or other, which may serve to cover them from the violence of the storm), "*but not of my Spirit*" (not such as God by his Spirit, in the mouth of

his prophets, directed them to), “and therefore it will prove too short a covering, and a refuge of lies.”

2. They could not confide in God. They did not think it enough to have God on their side, nor were they at all solicitous to make him their friend, but they *strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh*; they thought him a powerful ally, and doubted not but to be able to cope with the Assyrian while they had him for them. *The shadow of Egypt* (and it was but a shadow) was the covering in which they wrapped themselves.

II. What was the evil of this sin.

1. It bespoke them *rebellious children*; and a *woe* is here denounced against them under that character, v. 1. They were, in profession, God’s children; but, not trusting in him, they were justly stigmatized as rebellious; for, if we distrust God’s providence, we do in effect withdraw ourselves from our allegiance.

2. They added sin to sin. It was sin that brought them into distress; and then, instead of repenting, they *trespassed yet more against the Lord*, 2Ch. 28:22. And those that had abused God’s mercies to them, making them the fuel of their lusts, abused their afflictions too, making them an excuse for their distrust of God; and so they make bad worse, and add sin to sin; and those that do so, as they make their own chain heavy, so it is just with God to make their plagues wonderful. Now that which aggravated their sin was,

(1.) That they took so much pains to secure the Egyptians for their allies: *They walk to go down to Egypt*, travel up and down to find an advantageous road thither; but they *have not asked at my mouth*, never considered whether God would allow and approve of it or no.

(2.) That they were at such a vast expense to do it, v. 6. They load *the beasts of the south* (horses fetched from Egypt, which lay south from Judea) with their riches, fancying, as it is common with people in a fright, that they were safer any where than where they were. Or they sent their riches thither as bribes to Pharaoh’s courtiers, to engage them in their interests, or as pay for their army. God would have helped them *gratis*; but, if they will have help from the Egyptians, they must pay dearly for it, and they seem willing to do so. The riches that are so spent will turn to a bad account. They carried their effects to Egypt through a land (so it may be read) of trouble and anguish, that vast howling wilderness which lay between Canaan and Egypt, *whence come the lion and fiery serpent*, Deu. 8:15. They would venture through that dangerous wilderness, to bring what they had to Egypt. Or it may be meant of Egypt itself, which had been to Israel a house of bondage and therefore a land of trouble and anguish, and which abounded in ravenous and venomous creatures. See what

dangers men run into that forsake God, and what dangers they will run into in pursuance of their carnal confidences and their expectations from the creature.

III. What would be the consequence of it.

1. The Egyptians would receive their ambassadors, would address them very respectfully, and be willing to treat with them (v. 4): *His princes were at Zoan, at Pharaoh's court there, and had their audience of the king, who encouraged them to depend upon his friendship and the succours he would send them.* But,

2. They would not answer their expectation: They *could not profit them*, v. 5. For God says, *They shall not profit them* (v. 6), and every creature is that to us (and no more) which he makes it to be. The forces they were to furnish them with could not be raised in time; or, when they were raised, they were not fit for service, and they would not venture any of their veteran troops in the expedition; or the march was so long that they could not come up when they had occasion for them; or the Egyptians would not be cordial to Israel, but would secretly incline to the Assyrians, upon some account or other: *The Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose*, v. 7. They shall hinder and hurt, instead of helping. And therefore,

3. These people, that were now so fond of the Egyptians, would at length be ashamed of them, and of all their expectations from them and confidence in them (v. 3): *"The strength of Pharaoh, which was your pride, shall be your shame; all your neighbours will upbraid you, and you will upbraid yourselves, with your folly in trusting to it. And the shadow of Egypt, that land shadowing with wings* (Isa. 18: 1), which was your confidence, shall be your confusion; it will not only disappoint you, and be the matter of your shame, but it will weaken all your other supports, and be an occasion of mischief to you." God afterwards threatens the ruin of Egypt for this very thing, because they had dealt treacherously with Israel and *been a staff of a reed* to them, Eze. 29: 6, 7. The princes and ambassadors of Israel, who were so forward to court an alliance with them, when they come among them shall see so much of their weakness, or rather of their baseness, that *they shall all be ashamed of a people that could not be a help or profit to them, but a shame and reproach*, v. 5. Those that trust in God, in his power, providence, and promise, are never made ashamed of their hope; but those that put confidence in any creature will sooner or later find it a reproach to them. God is true, and may be trusted, but every man a liar, and must be suspected. The Creator is a rock of ages, the creature a broken reed. We cannot expect too little from man nor too much from God.

IV. The use and application of all this (v. 7): *"Therefore have I cried concerning this matter, this project of theirs. I have published it, that all might take notice of it. I have pressed it as one in earnest. Their strength is to sit still,*

in a humble dependence upon God and his goodness and a quiet submission to his will, and not to wander about and put themselves to great trouble to seek help from this and the other creature.” If we sit still in a day of distress, hoping and quietly waiting for the salvation of the Lord, and using only lawful regular methods for our own preservation, this will be the strength of our souls both for services and sufferings, and it will engage divine strength for us. We weaken ourselves, and provoke God to withdraw from us, when we make flesh our arm, for then our hearts depart from the Lord. When we have tired ourselves by seeking for help from creatures we shall find it the best way of recruiting ourselves to repose in the Creator. *Here I am, let him do with me as he pleases.*

ISA. 30: 8-17

Here,

I. The preface is very awful. The prophet must not only preach this, but he must write it (v. 8), *write it in a table*, to be hung up and exposed to public view; he must carefully *note it*, not in loose papers which might be lost or torn, but *in a book*, to be preserved for posterity, *in perpetuam rei memoriam* — *for a standing testimony* against this wicked generation; let it remain not only to the next succeeding ages, but for ever and ever, while the world stands; and so it shall, for the book of the scriptures no doubt, shall continue, and be read, to the end of time. Let it be written,

1. To shame the men of the present age, who would not hear and heed it when it was spoken. Let it be written, that it may not be lost; their children may profit by it, though they will not.

2. To justify God in the judgments he was about to ring upon them; people will be tempted to think he was too hard upon them, and over-severe, unless they know how very bad they were, how very provoking, and what fair means God tried with them before he brought it to this extremity.

3. For warning to others not to do as they did, lest they should fare as they fared. It is designed for admonition to those of the remotest place and age, even those *upon whom the ends of the world have come*, 1Co. 10:11. It may be of use for God’s ministers not only to preach, but to write; for that which is written remains.

II. The character given of the profane and wicked Jews is very sad. He must, if he will draw them in their own colours, write this concerning them (and we are sure he does not bear false witness against them, nor make them worse than they were, for the judgment of God is according to truth), *That this is a*

rebellious people, v. 9. The Jews were, for aught we know, the only professing people God had then in the world, and yet many of them were a rebellious people.

1. They rebelled against their own convictions and covenants: “They are *lying children*, that will not stand to what they say, that promise fair, but perform nothing;” when he took them into covenant with himself he said of them, *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie* (Isa. 63: 8); but they proved otherwise.

2. They rebelled against the divine authority: “They are *children that will not hear the law of the Lord*, nor heed it, but will do as they have a mind, let God himself say what he will to the contrary.”

III. The charge drawn up against them is very high and the sentence passed upon them very dreadful. Two things they here stand charged with, and their doom is read for both, a fearful doom: —

1. They forbade the prophets to speak to them in God’s name, and to deal faithfully with them.

(1.) This their sin is described, v. 10, 11. They set themselves so violently against the prophets to hinder them from preaching, or at least from dealing plainly with them in their preaching, did so banter them and browbeat them, that they did in effect *say to the seers, See not*. They had the light, but they loved darkness rather. It was their privilege that they had seers among them, but they did what they could to put out their eyes — that they had prophets among them, but they did what they could to stop their mouths; for they tormented them in their wicked ways, Rev. 11:10. Those that silence good ministers, and discountenance good preaching, are justly counted, and called, *rebels against God*. See what it was in the prophets’ preaching with which they found themselves aggrieved.

[1.] The prophets told them of their faults, and warned them of their misery and danger by reason of sin, and they could not bear that. They must speak to them smooth things, must flatter them in their sins, and say that they did well, and there was no harm, no peril, in the course of life they lived in. Let a thing be ever so right and true, if it be not smooth, they will not hear it. But if it be agreeable to the good opinion they have of themselves, and will confirm them in that, though it be ever so false and ever so great a cheat upon them, they will have it prophesied to them. Those deserve to be deceived that desire to be so.

[2.] The prophets stopped them in their sinful pursuits, and stood in their way like the angel in Balaam’s road, with the sword of God’s wrath drawn in their hand; so that they could not proceed without terror. And this they took as a

great insult. When they went on frowardly in the way of their hearts they said to the prophets, “*Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the paths.* What do you do in our way? Cannot you let us alone to do as we please?” Those have their hearts fully set in them to do evil that bid their faithful monitors to stand out of their way. *Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?* 2Ch. 25:16.

[3.] The prophets were continually telling them of the Holy One of Israel, what an enemy he is to sin ad how severely he will reckon with sinners; and this they could not endure to hear of. Both the thing itself and the expression of it were too serious for them; and therefore, if the prophets will speak to them, they will make it their bargain that they shall not call God *the Holy One of Israel*; for God’s holiness is that attribute which wicked people most of all dread. Let us no more be troubled with that state-preface (as Mr. White calls it) to your impertinent harangues. Those have reason to fear perishing in their sins that cannot bear to be frightened out of them.

(2.) Now what is the doom passed upon them for this? We have it, v. 12, 13. Observe,

[1.] Who it is that gives judgment upon them: *Thus saith the Holy One of Israel.* That title of God which they particularly excepted against the prophet makes use of. Faithful ministers will not be driven from using such expressions as are proper to awaken sinners, though they be displeasing. We must tell men that God is the *Holy One of Israel*, and so they shall find him, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

[2.] What the ground of the judgment is: *Because they despise this word* — wither, in general, every word that the prophets said to them, or this word in particular, which declares God to be *the Holy One of Israel*: “they despise this, and will neither make it their fear, to stand in awe of it, nor make it their hope, to put any confidence in it; but, rather than they will be beholden to *the Holy One of Israel*, they will *trust in oppression and perverseness*, in the wealth they have got and the interest they have made by fraud and violence, or in the sinful methods they have taken for their own security, in contradiction to God and his will. On these they lean, and therefore it is just that they should fall.”

[3.] What the judgment is that is passed upon them: “*This iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall.* This confidence of yours will be like a house built upon the sand, which will fall in the storm and bury the builder in the ruins of it. Your contempt of that word of God which you might build upon will make every thing else you trust like a wall that bulges out, which, if any weight be laid upon it, comes down, nay, which often sinks with its own weight.” The ruin they would hereby bring upon themselves should be,

First, A surprising ruin: *The breaking shall come suddenly, at an instant*, when they do not expect it, which will make it the more frightful, and when they are not prepared or provided for it, which will make it the more fatal.

Secondly, An utter ruin, universal and irreparable: “Your and all your confidences shall be not only weak as the potter’s clay (Isa. 29:16), but *broken to pieces as the potter’s vessel*. He that has the rod of iron shall break it (Psa. 2: 9) and he shall not spare, shall not have any regard to it, nor be in care to preserve or keep whole any part of it. But, when once it is broken so as to be unfit for use, let it be dashed, let it be crushed, all to pieces, so that there may not remain one *sherd* big enough to *take up a little fire or water*” — two things we have daily need of, and which poor people commonly fetch in a piece of a broken pitcher. They shall not only be as a *bowing wall* (Psa. 62: 3), but as a broken mug or glass, which is good for nothing, nor can ever be made whole again.

2. They slighted the gracious directions God gave them, not only how to secure themselves and make themselves safe, but how to compose themselves and make themselves easy; they would take their own way, v. 15-17. Observe here,

(1.) The method God put them into for salvation and strength. The God that knew them, and knew what was proper for them, and desired their welfare, gave them this prescription; and it is recommended to us all.

[1.] Would we be saved from the evil of every calamity, guarded against the temptation of it and secured from the curse of it, which are the only evil things in it? It must be *in returning and rest*, in returning to God and reposing in him as our rest. Let us return from our evil ways, into which we have gone aside, and rest and settle in the way of God and duty, and that is the way to be saved. “Return from this project of going down to Egypt, and rest satisfied in the will of God, and then you may trust him with your safety. *In returning* (in the thorough reformation of your hearts and lives) *and in rest* (in an entire submission of your souls to God and a complacency in him) *you shall be saved.*”

[2.] Would we be strengthened to do what is required of us and to bear what is laid upon us? It must be *in quietness and in confidence*; we must keep our spirits calm and sedate by a continual dependence upon God, and his power and goodness; we must retire into ourselves with a holy quietness, suppressing all turbulent and tumultuous passions, and keeping the peace in our own minds. And we must rely upon God with a holy confidence that he can do what he will and will do what is best for his people. And this will be our strength; it will inspire us with such a holy fortitude as will carry us with ease and courage through all the difficulties we may meet with.

(2.) The contempt they put upon this prescription; they would not take God's counsel, though it was so much for their own good. And justly will those die of their disease that will not take God for their physician. We are certainly enemies to ourselves if we will not be subjects to him. They would not so much as try the method prescribed: "*But you said, No (v. 16), we will not compose ourselves, for we will flee upon horses and we will ride upon the swift; we will hurry hither and thither to fetch in foreign aids.*" They think themselves wiser than God, and that they know what is good for themselves better than he does. When Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah, those rebellious children would not be persuaded to sit still and patiently to expect God's appearing for them, as he did wonderfully at last; but they would shift for their own safety, and thereby they exposed themselves to so much the more danger.

(3.) The sentence passed upon them for this. Their sin shall be their punishment: "You will flee, and therefore *you shall flee*; you will be upon the full speed, and therefore so shall those be that pursue you." The dogs are most apt to run barking after him that rides fast. The conquerors protected those that sat still, but pursued those that made their escape; and so that very project by which they hoped to save themselves was justly their ruin and the most guilty suffered most. It is foretold, v. 17,

[1.] That they should be easily cut off; they should be so dispirited with their own fears, increased by their flight, that one of the enemy should defeat a thousand of them, and five put an army to flight, which could never be *unless their Rock had sold them* Deu. 32:30.

[2.] That they should be generally cut off, and only here and there one should escape alone in a solitary place, and be left for a spectacle too, *as a beacon upon the top of a mountain*, a warning to others to avoid the like sinful courses and carnal confidences.

ISA. 30:18-26

The closing words of the foregoing paragraph (*You shall be left as a beacon upon a mountain*) some understand as a promise that a remnant of them should be reserved as monuments of mercy; and here the prophet tells them what good times should succeed these calamities. Or the first words in this paragraph may be read by way of antithesis, *Notwithstanding this, yet will the Lord wait that he may be gracious*. The prophet, having shown that those who made Egypt their confidence would be ashamed of it, here shows that those who sat still and made God alone their confidence would have the comfort of it. It is matter of comfort to the people of God, when the times are very bad, that *all will be well*

yet, well with those that fear God, when we say to the wicked, *It shall be ill with you.*

I. God will be gracious to them and will have mercy on them. This is the foundation of all good. If we find favour with God, and he have mercy upon us, we shall have comfort according to the time that we have been afflicted.

1. The mercy in store for them is very affectingly expressed.

(1.) “He will *wait to be gracious* (v. 18); he will wait till you return to him and seek his face, and then he will be ready to meet you with mercy. He will wait, that he may do it in the best and fittest time, when it will be most for his glory, when it will come to you with the most pleasing surprise. He will continually follow you with his favours, and not let slip any opportunity of being gracious to you.”

(2.) “He will stir up himself to deliver you, will be exalted, will be *raised up out of his holy habitation* (Zec. 2:13), that he may appear for you in more than ordinary instances of power and goodness; *and thus he will be exalted*, that is, he will glorify his own name. This is what he aims at in having mercy on his people.”

(3.) *He will be very gracious* (v. 19), and this in answer to prayer, which makes his kindness doubly kind: “*He will be gracious to thee, at the voice of thy cry*, the cry of thy necessity, when that is most urgent — the cry of thy prayer, when that is most fervent. *When he shall hear it*, there needs no more; at the first word *he will answer thee*, and say, *Here I am.*” Herein he is very gracious indeed. In particular,

[1.] Those who were disturbed in the possession of their estates shall again enjoy them quietly. When the danger is over *the people shall dwell in Zion, at Jerusalem*, as they used to do; they shall dwell safely, free from the fear of evil.

[2.] Those who were all in tears shall have cause to rejoice, and shall weep no more; and those who dwell in Zion, the holy city, will find enough there to wipe away tears from their eyes.

2. This is grounded upon two great truths:

(1.) That *the Lord is a God of judgment*; he is both wise and just in all the disposals of his providence, true to his word and tender of his people. If he correct his children, it is *with judgment* (Jer. 10:24), with moderation and discretion, considering their frame. We think we may safely refer ourselves to a man of judgment; and shall we not commit our way to a God of judgment?

(2.) That therefore all those are blessed who *wait for him*, who not only wait on him with their prayers, but wait for him with their hopes, who will not take any indirect course to extricate themselves out of their straits, or anticipate their deliverance, but patiently expect God's appearances for them in his own way and time. Because God is infinitely wise, those are truly happy who refer their cause to him.

II. They shall not again know the want of the means of grace, v. 20, 21. Here,

1. It is supposed that they might be brought into straits and troubles after this deliverance was wrought for them. It was promised (v. 19), that they should *weep no more* and that God would be *gracious to them*; and yet here it is taken for granted that God may give them the *bread of adversity and the water of affliction*, prisoners' fare (1Ki. 22:27), coarse and sorry food, such as the poor use. When one trouble is over we know not how soon another may succeed; and we may have an interest in the favour of God, and such consolations as are sufficient to prohibit weeping, and yet may have bread of adversity given us to eat and water of affliction to drink. Let us therefore not judge of love or hatred by what is before us.

2. It is promised that their eyes should *see their teachers*, that is, that they should have faithful teachers among them, and should have hearts to regard them and not slight them as they had done; and then they might the better be reconciled to the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. It was a common saying among the old Puritans, *Brown bread and the gospel are good fare*. A famine of bread is not so great a judgment as a famine of the word of God, Amo. 8:11, 12. It seems that their teachers had been removed into corners (probably being forced to shift for their safety in the reign of Ahaz), but it shall be so no more. *Veritas non quaerit angulos — Truth seeks no corners for concealment*. But the teachers of truth may sometimes be driven into corners for shelter; and it goes ill with the church when it is so, when the woman with her crown of twelve stars is forced to flee into the wilderness (Rev. 12: 6), when the prophets are *hidden by fifty in a cave*, 1Ki. 18: 4. But God will find a time to call the teachers out of their corners again, and to replace them in their solemn assemblies, which shall *see their own teachers*, the *eyes of all the synagogue* being fastened on them, Luk. 4:20. And it will be the more pleasing because of the restraint they have been for some time under, as light out of darkness, as life from the dead. To all that love God and their own souls this return of faithful teachers out of their corners, especially with a promise that they *shall not be removed into corners any more*, is the most acceptable part of any deliverance, and has comfort enough in it to sweeten even the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. But this is not all:

3. It is promised that they shall have the benefit, not only of the public ministry, but of private and particular admonition and advice (v. 21): “*Thy ears shall hear a word behind thee*, calling after thee as a man calls after a traveller that he sees going out of his road.” Observe,

(1.) Whence this word shall come — from *behind thee*, from some one whom thou dost not see, but who sees thee. “Thy eyes see thy teachers; but this is a teacher out of sight, it is thy own conscience, which shall now by the grace of God be awakened to do its office.”

(2.) What the word shall be: “*This is the way, walk you in it*. When thou art doubting, conscience shall direct thee to the way of duty; when thou art dull and trifling, conscience shall quicken thee in that way.” As God has not left himself without witness, so he has not left us without guides to show us our way.

(3.) The seasonableness of this word: It shall come *when you turn to the right hand or to the left*. We are very apt to miss our way; there are turnings on both hands, and those so tracked and seemingly straight that they may easily be mistaken for the right way. There are right-hand and left-hand errors, extremes on each side virtue; the tempter is busy courting us into the by-paths. It is happy then if by the particular counsels of a faithful minister or friend, or the checks of conscience and the strivings of God’s Spirit, we be set right and prevented from going wrong.

(4.) The success of this word: “It shall not only be spoken, but thy ears shall hear it; whereas God has formerly *spoken once, yea, twice*, and thou *hast not perceived it* (Job. 33:14), now thou shalt listen attentively to these secret whispers, and hear them with an obedient ear.” If God gives us not only the word, but the hearing ear, not only the means of grace, but a heart to make a good use of those means, we have reason to say, He is very gracious to us, and reason to hope he has yet further mercy in store for us.

III. They shall be cured of their idolatry, shall fall out with their idols, and never be reconciled to them again, v. 22. The deliverance God shall work for them shall convince them that it is their interest, as well as duty, to serve him only; and they shall own that, as their trouble was brought upon them for their idolatries, so it was removed upon condition that they should not return to them. This is also the good effect of their seeing their teachers and hearing the word behind them; by this it shall appear that they are the better for the means of grace they enjoy — they shall break off from their best-beloved sin. Observe,

1. How foolishly mad they had formerly been upon their idols, in the day of their apostasy. Idolaters are said to be *mad upon their idols* (Jer. 50:38),

doatingly fond of them. They had *graven images of silver*, and *molten images of gold*, and, though gold needs no painting, they had coverings and ornaments on these; they spared no cost in doing honour to their idols.

2. How wisely mad (if I may so speak) they now were at their idols, what a holy indignation they conceived against them in the day of their repentance. They not only degraded their images, but defaced them, not only defaced them, but defiled them; they not only spoiled the shape of them, but in a pious fury threw away the gold and silver they were made of, though otherwise valuable and convertible to a good use. They could not find in their hearts to make any vessel of honour of them. The rich clothes wherewith their images were dressed up they cast away as a filthy cloth which rendered those that touched it *unclean until the evening*, Lev. 15:23. Note, To all true penitents sin has become very odious; they loathe it, and loathe themselves because of it; they cast it away to the dunghill, the fittest place for it, nay, to the cross, for they crucify the flesh; their cry against it is, *Crucify it, crucify it*. They say unto it, *Abi hinc in malam rem — Get thee hence*. They are resolved never to harbour it any more. They put as far from as they can all the occasions of sin and temptations to it, though they are as a right eye or a right hand, and protest against it as Ephraim did (Hos. 14: 8), *What have I to do any more with idols?* Probably this was fulfilled in many particular persons, who, by the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army, were convinced of the folly of their idolatry and forsook it. It was fulfilled in the body of the Jewish nation at their return from their captivity in Babylon, for they abhorred idols ever after; and it is accomplished daily in the conversion of souls, by the power of divine grace, from spiritual idolatry to the fear and love of God. Those that join themselves to the Lord must abandon every sin, and say unto it, *Get thee hence*.

IV. God will then give them plenty of all good things. When he gives them their teachers, and they give him their hearts, so that they begin to seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, *then all other things shall be added to them* Mat. 6:33. And when the people are brought to praise God *then shall the earth yield her increase, and with it God, even our own God, shall bless us*, Psa. 67: 5, 6. So it follows here: "When you shall have abandoned your idols, *then shall God give the rain of your seed,*" v. 23. When we return to God in a way of duty he will meet us with his favours.

1. God will give you rain of your seed, rain to water the seed you sow, just at the time that it calls for it, as much as it needs and no more. Observe, How man's industry and God's blessing concur to the good things we enjoy relating to the life that now is: *Thou shalt sow the ground*, that is thy part, and then *God will give the rain of thy seed*, that is his part. It is so in spiritual fruit; we must take pains with our hearts and then wait on God for his grace.

2. The increase of the earth shall be rich and good, and every thing the best of the kind; it shall be *fat and fat*, very fat and very good, *fat and plenteous* (so we read it), good and enough of it. Your land shall be Canaan indeed; it was remarkably so after the defeat of Sennacherib, by the special blessing of God, Isa. 37:30. God would thus repair the losses they sustained by that devastation.

3. Not only the tillage, but the pasture-ground should be remarkably fruitful: *The cattle shall feed in large pastures*; those that are at grass shall have room enough, and the oxen and asses that are kept up for use, to ear the ground, which must be the better fed for their being worked, *shall eat clean provender*. The corn shall not be given them in the chaff as usual, to make it go the further, but they shall have good clean corn fit for man's use, being *winnowed with the fan*. The brute-creatures shall share in the abundance; it is fit they should, for they groan under the burden of the curse which man's sin has brought upon the earth.

4. Even the tops of the mountains, that used to be barren, shall be so well watered with the rain of heaven that there shall be *rivers and streams* there, and running down thence to the valleys (v. 25), and this *in the day of the great slaughter* that should be made by the angel in the camp of the Assyrians, *when the towers and batteries* they had erected for the carrying on of the siege of Jerusalem, the army being slain, *should fall* of course. It is probable that this was fulfilled in the letter of it, and that about the same time that that army was cut off there were extraordinary rains in mercy to the land.

V. The effect of all this should be extraordinary comfort and joy to the people of God, v. 26. Light shall increase; that is, knowledge shall increase (when the prophecies are accomplished they shall be fully understood) or rather triumph shall: the light of the joy that is sown for the righteous shall now come up with a great increase. *The light of the moon shall become as bright and as strong as that of the sun, and that of the sun shall increase proportionably and be as the light of seven days*; every one shall be much more cheerful and appear much more pleasant than usual. There shall be a high spring-tide of joy in Judah and Jerusalem, upon occasion of the ruin of the Assyrian army, *when the Lord binds up the breach of his people*, not only saves them from being further wounded, but heals the wounds that have been given them by this invasion and makes up all their losses. The great distress they were reduced to, their despair of relief, and the suddenness of their deliverance, would much augment their joy. This is not unfitly applied by many to the light which the gospel brought into the world to those that sat in darkness, which has far exceeded the Old-Testament light as that of the sun does that of the moon, and which proclaims *healing to the broken-hearted, and the binding up of their wounds*.

ISA. 30:27-33

This terrible prediction of the ruin of the Assyrian army, though it is a threatening to them, is part of the promise to the Israel of God, that God would not only punish the Assyrians for the mischief they had done to the Israel of God, but would disable and deter them from doing the like again; and this prediction, which would now shortly be accomplished, would ratify and confirm the foregoing promises, which should be accomplished in the latter days. Here is,

I. God Almighty angry, and coming forth in anger against the Assyrians. He is here introduced in all the power and all the terror of his wrath, v. 27. *The name of Jehovah*, which the Assyrians disdain and set at a distance from them, as if they were out of its reach and it could do them no harm, *behold, it comes from far*. A messenger in the name of the Lord comes from as far off as heaven itself. He is a messenger of wrath, *burning with his anger*. God's *lips are full of indignation* at the blasphemy of Rabshakeh, who compared the God of Israel with the gods of the heathen; *his tongue is as a devouring fire*, for he can speak his proud enemies to ruin; his very breath comes with as much force as an overflowing stream, and with it he shall slay the wicked, Isa. 11: 4. He does not stifle or smother his resentments, as men do theirs when they are either causeless or impotent; but he *shall cause his glorious voice to be heard* when he proclaims war with an enemy that sets him at defiance, v. 30. He shall display *the indignation of his anger*, anger in the highest degree; it shall be as *the flame of a devouring fire*, which carries and consumes all before it, with *lightning* or dissipation, and with *tempest and hailstones*, all which are the formidable phenomena of nature, and therefore expressive of the terror of the Almighty God of nature.

II. The execution done by this anger of the Lord. Men are often angry when they can only threaten and talk big; but when God causes his glorious voice to be heard that shall not be all: he will *show the lighting down of his arm* too, v. 30. The operations of his providence shall accomplish the menaces of his word. Those that *would not see the lifting up of his arm* (Isa. 26:11) shall feel the lighting down of it, and find, to their cost, that the burden thereof is heavy (v. 27), so heavy that they cannot bear it, nor bear up against it, but must unavoidably sink and be crushed under it. *Who knows the power of his anger* or imagines what an offended God can do? Five things are here prepared for the execution: —

1. Here is *an overflowing stream*, that *shall reach to the midst of the neck*, shall quite overwhelm the whole body of the army, and Sennacherib only, the head of

it, shall keep above water and escape this stroke, while yet he is reserved for another in the house of Nisroch his god. The Assyrian army had been to Judah *as an overflowing stream, reaching even to the neck* (Isa. 8: 7, 8), and now the breath of God's wrath will be so to it.

2. Here is *a sieve of vanity*, with which God would sift those nations of which the Assyrian army was composed, v. 28. The great God can sift nations, for they are all before him as the small dust of the balance; he will sift them, not to gather out of them any that should be preserved, but so as to shake them one against another, put them into great consternation, and shake them all away at last; for it is a sieve of vanity (which retains nothing) that they are shaken with, and they are found all chaff.

3. Here is *a bridle*, which God has in their jaws, to curb and restrain them from doing the mischief they would do, and to force and constrain them to serve his purposes against their own will, Isa. 10: 7. God particularly says of Sennacherib (Isa. 37:29) that he will put a hook in his nose and a bridle in his lips. It is a *bridle causing them to err*, forcing them to such methods as will certainly be destructive to themselves and their interest and in which they will be infatuated. God with a word guides his people into the right way (v. 21), but with a bridle he turns his enemies headlong upon their own ruin.

4. Here is *a rod and a staff, even the voice of the Lord*, his word giving orders concerning it, with which *the Assyrian shall be beaten down*, v. 31. The Assyrian had been himself a rod in God's hand for the chastising of his people, and had smitten them, Isa. 10: 5. That was a transient rod; but against the Assyrian shall go forth *a grounded staff*, that shall give a steady blow, shall stick close to him and strike home, so as to leave an impression upon him. It is a staff with a foundation, founded upon the enemies' deserts and God's determinate counsel. It is a consumption determined (Isa. 10:23), and therefore there is no escaping it, no getting out of the reach of it; it shall pass in every place where an Assyrian is found, and the Lord shall *lay it upon him*, and cause it to rest, v. 32. Such is the woeful case of those that persist in enmity to God: *the wrath of God abides on them*.

5. Here is *Tophet ordained and prepared* for them, v. 33. The valley of the son of Hinnom, adjoining to Jerusalem, was called *Tophet*. In that valley, it is supposed, many of the Assyrian regiments lay encamped, and were there slain by the destroying angel; or there the bodies of those that were so slain were burned. Hezekiah had *lately, and from yesterday* (so the word is) *ordained it*; that is, say some, he had cleared it of the images that were set up in it, to which they there burnt their children, and so prepared it to be a receptacle for the dead bodies of their enemies, *for the king of Assyria* (that is, for his army) *it is*

prepared, and there is fuel enough ready to burn them all; and they shall be consumed as suddenly and effectually as if the fire were kept burning by a continual stream of brimstone, for such the breath of the Lord, his word and his wrath, will be to it. Now as the prophet, in the foregoing promises, slides insensibly into the promises of gospel graces and comforts, so here, in the threatening of the ruin of Sennacherib's army, he points at the final and everlasting destruction of all impenitent sinners. Our Saviour calls the future misery of the damned *Gehenna*, in allusion to the valley of Hinnom, which gives some countenance to the applying of this to that misery, as also that in the Apocalypse it is so often called the *lake that burns with fire and brimstone*. This is said to be prepared of old for the devil and his angels, for the greatest of sinners, the proudest, and that think themselves not accountable to any for what they say and do; even for kings it is prepared. It is *deep and large*, sufficient to receive the world of the ungodly; the *pile thereof is fire and much wood*. God's wrath is the fire, and sinners make themselves fuel to it; and *the breath of the Lord* (the power of his anger) *kindles it*, and will keep it ever burning. See Isa. 66:24. Wherefore *stand in awe and sin not*.

III. The great joy which this should occasion to the people of God. The Assyrian's fall is Jerusalem's triumph (v. 29): *You shall have a song as in the night*, a psalm of praise such as those sing who *by night stand in the house of the Lord*, and sing to his glory who *gives songs in the night*. It shall not be a song of vain mirth, but a sacred song, such as was sung when a holy solemnity was kept in a grave and religious manner. Our joy in the fall of the church's enemies must be a holy joy, *gladness of heart, as when one goes, with a pipe* (such as the sons of the prophets used when they prophesied, 1Sa. 10: 5), *to the mountain of the Lord*, there to celebrate the praises of *the Mighty One of Israel*. Nay, in every place where the divine vengeance shall pursue the Assyrians they shall not only fall unlamented, but all their neighbours shall attend their fall *with tabrets and harps*, pleased to see how God, *in battles of shaking*, such as shake them out of the world, fights with them (v. 32); for *when the wicked perish there is shouting*; and it is with a particular satisfaction that wise and good men see the ruin of those who, like the Assyrians, have insolently bidden defiance to God and trampled upon all mankind.