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ISAIAH 30:18-33

GOD'S PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE ~ GOD WILL JUDGE THE NATIONS

It is interesting to try and look at things from God's perspective. He literally sees the end from the beginning and everything in between. What would it be like to see from God's vantage point? Because our lives here on Earth are fixed in time, we simply cannot "see what he sees." That said, the difference between God leading and guiding the people of Judah "from behind," and the Spirit of God leading believers today from inside our hearts is nothing less than stunning.

These 15 verses paint some beautiful pictures of God's patience, tenderness and willingness to lead his people right where they are. At the same time, Isaiah creates some vivid images of utter destruction and devastation that will take place, not just in the present time in their impending battle with Assyria, but in the coming millennium as well. They are all woven together and presented simply as a picture of God's love for and devotion to his people.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.</p> <p>¹⁹ For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. ²⁰ And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. ²¹ And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. ²² Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “Be gone!”</p>	<p>f 30:18 See Jer. 29:11–13; Heb. 4:16.</p> <p>g 30:20 Or “though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction.”</p> <p>h 30:20 The Hebrew word for “teacher” (<i>mowreh</i>) is a homonym for “rain.” The gift of a teacher is to water our hearts with the rain of the Spirit and the rain of Truth. When God teaches our hearts, it is like spring rain falling, refreshing and renewing our spirits. See 1 Cor. 3:6.</p> <p>i 30:21 This verse and the preceding verse teach us that (1) God will be with us in our troubles. (2) God will not hide himself from us when we pass through hard times. (3) God himself will teach us lessons in our trials. (4) We can set our eyes on him no matter what is happening around us. (5) His voice will lead us into making good decisions. (6) We have his promise of constant guidance as we listen to his voice. The voice of the Lord and the Word of God are our faithful guides throughout our lives.</p>	<p>God’s Promise to His People</p> <p>Isaiah 30:18 For this reason the Lord is still waiting to show his favor to you so he can show you his marvelous love. He waits to be gracious to you. He sits on his throne ready to show mercy to you. f For Yahweh is the Lord of justice, faithful to keep his promises. Overwhelmed with bliss are all who will entwine their hearts in him, waiting for him to help them.</p> <p>¹⁹ Yes, the people of Zion who live in Jerusalem will weep no more. How compassionate he will be when he hears your cries for help! He will answer you when he hears your voice! ²⁰ Even though the Lord may allow you to go through a season of hardship and difficulty, g he himself will be there with you. He will not hide himself from you, for your eyes will constantly see him as your Teacher. h ²¹ When you turn to the right or turn to the left, you will hear his voice behind you to guide you, saying, “This is the right path; follow it.” i</p> <p>²² Then you will see your idols as they are—unclean! Your silver-overlaid idols and gold-plated images are defiled. You will discard them like a filthy menstrual cloth, saying to them, “Good riddance!”</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>²³ And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures, ²⁴ and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. ²⁵ And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the LORD binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.</p> <p>²⁷ Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire; ²⁸ his breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction, and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray.</p> <p>²⁹ You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. ³⁰ And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones. ³¹ The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the LORD, when he strikes with his rod. ³² And every stroke of the appointed staff that the LORD lays on them will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres. Battling with brandished arm, he will fight with them. ³³ For a burning place has long been prepared; indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.</p>	<p>j 30:23 Or “bread and the produce of the ground will be rich and plentiful.”</p> <p>k 30:24 Or “The oxen and donkey that till the ground will feed on silage that has been winnowed with pitchfork and shovel.”</p> <p>l 30:27 Or “The name of Yahweh comes from far away.”</p> <p>m 30:27 Or “his tongue.”</p> <p>n 30:30 See Ps. 29.</p> <p>o 30:30 Or “arm,” a metaphor for his power.</p> <p>p 30:32 Or “established (destined for punishment) rod.”</p> <p>q 30:32 As translated by some scholars. The Hebrew word <i>uvemillhamot</i> (“with battles of”) is emended by some to read <i>uvimkhilot</i> (“with dancing”). The majority view of the Hebrew text is “battles of brandishing (uplifted weapons/arms).” This “punishing rod” will fall on the spiritual forces of darkness as we celebrate and dance in the victory of the risen Christ.</p> <p>r 30:33 Although the Hebrew of this verse is uncertain, the implication is that the king of Assyria will be thrown into fire. There is also the hint of our eternal foe, Satan, the king of darkness, being cast into the lake of fire. See Rev. 20:10.</p>	<p>²³ Then God will supply you with abundant rain for the seeds you sow. He will bless you with an incredible, plentiful harvest. j And in that day he will give you lush, broad pastures for your cattle. ²⁴ Even your oxen and donkeys that work the soil will feed on good grain, separated from its chaff. k ²⁵ On the day of great slaughter, when all their towers tumble, God will bless you with sparkling streams and bubbling brooks flowing down every high hill and every lofty mountain. ²⁶ Moonlight will shine as bright as sunlight, and the sun’s glare will become seven times brighter, like the light of seven days rolled into one. That will be the day when the Lord Yahweh heals the bruises and wounds that he has inflicted.</p> <p>God Will Judge the Nations</p> <p>²⁷ Look! Here comes Yahweh with his mighty power and glory! l He comes in his awesome splendor with thick clouds! Consumed with anger, his lips are filled with fury, and his words m are a devouring fire! ²⁸ His breath is as overwhelming as a flooding river reaching up to the neck. He sifts the nations in his sieve of destruction and places a bridle in their jaws that causes them to wander.</p> <p>²⁹ But you will have a joyous song throughout the night, as one celebrating a holy, consecrated feast. You will have gladness of heart, as one celebrating to the sound of a flute and dancing up the mountain of Yahweh, the Rock who shelters Israel! ³⁰ And Yahweh will cause everyone to hear his awe-inspiring, majestic voice. n He will open their eyes to see his mighty power o coming down with raging anger and consuming fire! His power will descend in cloudburst, thunderstorm, and hail. ³¹ And when his rod strikes the Assyrians, they will be terror-stricken by the mighty voice of Lord Yahweh. ³² Every stroke of Yahweh’s punishing rod p will be to the sound of cymbals and strumming harps. God himself fights them in battle with dancing! q ³³ From long ago, the king’s fiery burial place has been prepared, stacked high with plenty of firewood to fuel the flame. r Yahweh’s breath, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.</p>

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

JOHN A. MARTIN

The Lord's graciousness to His people (30:18-33)

- **30:18-22.** Though the people had turned from the LORD, He longed to be gracious and compassionate to them (v. 18; cf. v. 19) for they were in a covenant relationship with Him. He is also the God of justice, giving blessings to those who depend on Him. In the Millennium Israel will again be faithful to the LORD. And when she calls on Him (not on some other nation) for help, He will answer. Though she experienced difficulties (e.g., having only bread to eat and water to drink in times of calamity), eventually God will bless her. The Israelites will readily listen to their spiritual guides (teachers) such as the prophets and [Vol. 1, p. 1081] priests (in contrast with rejecting them, v. 10); no longer will the teachers need to hide for safety. The people will be sensitive to God's Word, as if He were saying, This is the way, walk in it. They will be conscious of God's leading at all times. When they heed His instructions they will then get rid of their idols (cf. 31:7; Hosea 14:3b; Micah 5:13-14), things that are defiled and morally dirty.
- **30:23-26.** Isaiah then described what times will be like when the people live according to God's Word and are obedient to Him. In the Millennium God will send ... rain, and crops will be plentiful (cf. Deut. 28:1-14). Even the animals will have plenty to eat (Isa. 30:23-24). The day of great slaughter may refer to the Battle of Armageddon (cf. Rev. 16:16; 19:17-21). After Israel's and God's enemies are defeated, Israel will enjoy great peace and an abundance of water in the land (Isa. 30:25).

Also light will be increased, for the moon will be like the sun and the sun will be seven times brighter than normal. Perhaps this is figurative language but it is difficult to know for sure. At that time the Lord will heal His people of the wounds (cf. 1:5) He inflicted, that is, He will restore them to the place of blessing.

- **30:27-33.** Isaiah now spoke again of the present situation, prophesying that the Assyrian army (v. 31), which was surrounding Jerusalem, would be defeated (37:36). This occurred in 701 B.C. God in His anger would rush against His enemies. Like dense clouds ... a fire, and a torrent (cf. v. 30) His wrath would overtake the enemy. He shakes the nations in a sieve, like a farmer shaking grain to clear it of small pebbles (cf. Amos 9:9). This defeat of Assyria would cause Judah to rejoice much as they did in their three annual festivals (Ex. 23:14-17) when they went to the temple on Mount Zion, the mountain of the LORD (cf. Isa. 11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 65:25; 66:20), who is the nation's Rock (cf. 17:10; 26:4; 44:8; cf. comments on Ps. 18:2), its source of security.

Merely by a command (voice, Isa. 30:30-31) of anger (cf. vv. 27-28) God would shatter Assyria with His scepter and rod. This would cause Judah to rejoice (cf. v. 29) with music from tambourines and harps (cf. 24:8). The Assyrian army would be destroyed like a pile of wood or a sacrifice in Topheth, an area in the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem where children were sometimes sacrificed to the false Ammonite god Molech (2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31; cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6, 11-14). This fire was for the king, perhaps Hezekiah, as if he were to use it in destroying his enemy. By God's breath (cf. Isa. 30:28) He would figuratively kindle the fire by which He would consume the bodies of the Assyrian soldiers. His breath would be like sulfur, which burns with great intensity (cf. Gen. 19:24; Job 18:15; Ps. 11:6; Ezek. 38:22; Rev. 9:17-18). This speaks of the eternal torment of the wicked in "the lake of fire" (KJV; Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Isaiah tells the leaders of Judah that Yahweh is their “Teacher.” Then, he goes on to describe how he will lead them from “behind.” What does the proximity of the Lord to his people in this situation tell you about the way God is choosing to lead them? As you look again at verse 22, what is he actually leading them into?
2. We read in verse 23 where it said that God will “give rain for the seed with which you sow.” Where have you sown seeds in your life that you are waiting for God to water?
3. When God waters seed, not only is the seed benefiting from the water, but the soil profits as well. Do you see God “watering” anyone you know in a way that might be preparing them to receive the seed you are ready to sow in their heart? (Mark 4:3-20)
4. When God is speaking through Isaiah saying, “‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left,” what is “the way” he is talking about?
5. How would you effectively communicate this type of spiritual leadership to someone who was new to being led by the Spirit in this way? In other words, how can you position yourself to be led by the voice of the Lord? How do YOU position yourself to follow the voice of the Lord? How has that changed as you have grown spiritually?