



ISAIAH 31

TRUST THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL ~ THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE ~ REPENT AND RETURN

Another Chapter, another woe! Isn't it interesting that Yahweh has so much to say about Judah reaching out to Egypt for help? It probably reveals just how much love was behind the word he gave to them earlier encouraging them not to be afraid of the threat posed by the Assyrian Army. Judah literally had nothing to worry about...except maybe a disgruntled God!

Repetition is a significant “tell” of the Lord. When he takes the time to repeat a word, you can bet he means business and you had better pay attention. His love is strong and persistent, but so is his desire for faith, trust and hope from us. He undoubtedly wants to be the focus of all three. Focusing on any “Plan B” is not only foolish, but can be dangerous as well!

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!² And yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.³ The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together.</p> <p>⁴ For thus the LORD said to me, “As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill.</p>	<p>a 31:3 Or “mighty ones.”</p> <p>b 31:3 “Human” is the Hebrew word adam.</p> <p>c 31:3 Or “stretches out his hand” (Eph. 4:11).</p> <p>d 31:4 See Rev. 5.</p> <p>e 31:4 The Hebrew word for “growl” (hagahj) is more commonly translated “meditates.”</p>	<p>Trust the Holy One of Israel</p> <p>Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who run down to Egypt for help, trusting in the might of their multitude of cavalry, chariots, and riders. Their confident trust is not in the Holy One of Israel, nor do they consult with Yahweh.² Yet he is wiser than them all! He can call down calamity upon evildoers and never needs to retract his words. He will stand up against the wicked and those who protect them.³ The Egyptians are not gods; a they're only human! b Their horses are not supernatural; they're only flesh! When Yahweh demonstrates his power, c the helper will stumble and the helped will fall— both will perish together!</p> <p>The Lord Will Fight for His People</p> <p>⁴ This is what Yahweh said to me: “When a lion d the great beast, growls e over his prey, and when the shepherds band together against him, the lion is neither terrified by their shouts nor disturbed by all the noise they make. So will Yahweh, the Commander of Angel Armies, come down to fight for you on Mount Zion and on Zion's hill!</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁵ The fool will no more be called noble, nor the scoundrel said to be honorable. ⁶ For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink. ⁷ As for the scoundrel—his devices are evil; he plans wicked schemes to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right. ⁸ But he who is noble plans noble things, and on noble things he stands.</p>	<p>f 31:7 See Acts 17:29; Rev. 13:13–18.</p> <p>g 31:9 Or “rock cliff” (Heb. seta).</p>	<p>⁵ Just as a bird hovers over its nest to protect its young, so will Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies, shield Jerusalem. He will protect her, deliver her, spare her, and rescue her!”</p> <p>Repent and Return</p> <p>⁶ “People of Israel! Repent and turn back to God, whom you have deeply betrayed. ⁷ For a time is coming when all people will throw away their sinful idols of silver and gold and forsake all that their own hands have made. f ⁸ Assyria will fall by the sword but not the sword of man. It will not be man’s sword that will slaughter them but God’s! They will run from battle, and their young men will be made slaves. ⁹ Fear will cause them to surrender their high fortress, g and they will panic at the sight of princes, and desert their battle flag,” says the Lord God of the fire that burns in Zion and whose furnace burns in Jerusalem!</p>

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

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- The woe pronounced (31:1-3)

- 31:1-3. This woe (see comments on 3:9) was pronounced on those who went to Egypt for help, and who relied on Egyptian horses and chariots instead of on God. Both actions—going to Egypt and acquiring horses—violated God’s stipulations in the Deuteronomic Covenant (Deut. 17:16). Since God does not go back on His words, He would judge the nation for her disobedience. The Egyptians could not help Judah for they were weak men. Only God could ultimately protect them from their enemies. If Judah persisted in seeking an alliance with Egypt, both countries would meet disaster.

- The Lord’s protection (31:4-9)

- **31:4-5.** God assured the people that His greatness would protect them from the terrifying Assyrian threat. As a lion meets up with a flock of sheep and is unafraid of a number of shepherds, so the LORD was not afraid of the Assyrians. He promised to do battle on Mount Zion, and like birds flying overhead He would shield Jerusalem and not let it fall into the enemy’s hands.
- **31:6-7.** Since Judah would be rescued by God (v. 5), Isaiah called on the nation to turn back to Him. Eventually they would throw their idols away in favor of the true God. Therefore Judah ought to throw them away now. Their future hope in the kingdom should change their present behavior. The future reality should have an ethical impact on their lives.
- **31:8-9.** Isaiah affirmed again that Assyria would fall, but only because of God’s work (by a sword that is not of man). The Assyrian commanders, seeing Judah’s battle standard and their soldiers being slaughtered (by the Angel of the Lord; cf. 37:36), would be terrified. The fire may refer to the fire of the altar

of burnt offering that burned continually, and the furnace is literally a baking oven. By protecting Judah, God would see that the fire on the altar continued to burn.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Let's do a little review. If Judah reaching out to Egypt for help fighting against Assyria was "Plan B," what was "Plan A" and where in Isaiah do we read about it?
2. What would be a contemporary equivalent of Judah trusting in Egypt's horses? Let's say we're talking about the economy. What is it that people in our nation might be trusting in if not God when it comes to finances and what does it cost us to not trust in the Lord here?
3. What are some of the things you use to "prop" you up when things get dicey in the area of finances? Relationships? Your future?
4. How do you deal with someone who is trying to use YOU to prop up their life? How do you shift their attention away from you and onto Jesus?
5. When it comes to trusting God, think about the last time you chose what you knew was "Plan B"? (I know...this is work. You can think of at least ONE time!) How did that choice make you feel? How did you respond to that feeling and what did you eventually do to correct your choice?