

# So You Wanna Go Back to Egypt? – Isaiah 30

**Introduction** – Here's the context. Judah had allied itself with Assyria (against Isaiah's warnings) in the days of Ahaz, but now, in the days of Hezekiah, Assyria has become the chief threat, and Judah has determined to go find refuge and security in Egypt. Egypt? In the Exodus, as soon as Israel left Egypt, many wanted to return. On the verge of taking the Promised Land, Israel refused to trust God. Centuries later, Judah still wants to go back to Egypt, still not trusting God – the One Who brought them out of Egypt. What happens when we return to our sins, our slaveries, our idols, thinking they will provide us with our happiness, comfort, security, or salvation? Repentance, including repentance for trusting "Egypt" is the only hope (Isaiah 30:15). What is your "Egypt?"

**Rebellious Children** (vv1-17) – Israel is God's son (Ex 4:23), called *from* and not *to* Egypt. But Israel is a rebellious son (v1, 9) deserving of death as the law declared (Deut 21:18-21). They refuse to seek God's counsel or Spirit, devising their own plans (vv1-2). Pharaoh has become their new god; he is their strength and shadow (vv2-3, Psalm 9:9, 14:6, 46:1). Covenantally and confessionally, they are followers of God. Functionally, they are idolaters and atheists; they do not trust God.

Isaiah lays out the vanity of where this will go. They will make unbelievable sacrifices to get to Egypt only to find out that she will not deliver after all; she is the toothless sea-monster, "*Rahab-the-Impotent*" (vv6-7). This burden is written down and it doesn't matter to God or His prophet that these are hard words; they will not be substituted with smooth sermons and prophecies (vv8-11). Instead, the Word of the Holy One is this: what you are about to do is going to bring about your sure destruction (vv12-14).

"*Return and rest, repent and trust,*" says the LORD God (v15). But rebels will not listen to reason; in fact, reasoning with them often only speeds them up. They are so sure of their plan (v16) but God mocks their very choice of words. The grand plan will end with all of Judah in ruin and Assyria banging at the door of all that is left: a lone banner on the hill (v17).

**Gracious Lord** (v18) – The Lord longs to be gracious, but He will only be so to those who wait on Him. He waits. He is patient, and to be given time to repent is a great mercy which should be grasped with profound gratitude (Rom 2:4). And here we find God's justice and mercy together, and His plans will overthrow all others. Referring to this theme of "waiting," Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Matt 23:37-38), and then went on to bring justice and mercy to the nations.

**Gracious Lord as Effective Teacher** (vv19-22) – "*For the people shall dwell...*" Reconciled to God, it will lead to no more weeping (v19). There will be trials, but the Lord as Teacher will make all things clear (James 1:2-8). Our ears will actively be open to His instruction, and we will want to throw away our idols with revulsion.

**Gracious Lord as Re-Creator and Healer** (vv23-26) – "*Then He will give the rain...*" God will restore all things, and this includes His creation, the fruitfulness of the land (economy), and our physical and spiritual bodies. This begins with the reign of Jesus now but moves towards fulfillment in the final resurrection (Rev 21:22-23).

**Gracious Lord as Singing Warrior** (vv27-33) – "*You shall have a song...*" Assyria will be beaten down by the word of the Lord (vv27-28, 31) and that word-song is sung by His people (vv29-32). Our psalms of victory are both a battle cry and a victory celebration. They are to be sung with faith in their manifestation here in time and space. They are to lift our countenance and turn us over and over again to our true strength and shadow. "Tophet" (v33) was a pit where children were sacrificed; this refuse pit would be the place of the true rebels against God. The saints sing "*Alleluia*" when Babylon, the city of rebellion who crucified the Lord, falls in a fiery judgment (Rev 18-19).

**What is Your Egypt?** – How do you go about identifying your "Egypt" and what does repentance look like? Where does your confessional theology and functional theology find themselves at odds?

**Let the Word Thunder the Gospel of God** – Through Jesus Christ alone, your sin has been conquered, its penalty paid, its power broken, its shame consumed. In Christ alone you have an assured hope, destiny, and eternity. At His right hand are pleasures forevermore. He conquered sin; He conquered your slavery; He conquered its power and guilt. Why would you leave Him and return to that, "*like a dog returns to its vomit*?"

**Let the Word Define all Sin** – Because you have allowed the enemy to sow seeds of doubt, you have refused to wait on the Lord, you have not been willing to take up your cross, die daily, and follow Him. You have refused to let the Word instruct you, admonish you, show you your sin as sin. You have refused grace that is for today and the promises of God for tomorrow. You have sold your inheritance for a pot of stew. You have created your own counsel, you have redefined right and wrong, good and evil, you have justified your sin, and there you go.

**Remove the Idol: Turn Away/Turn Towards** – vv15 and 18 are key. What you are about to put your faith in (your Egypt) is no help. What you are most afraid of (your Assyria) is no threat in the end. The God and Father of Jesus Christ is no disappointment, never in the long run. Return and rest and wait on Him.