

Explore the Bible: October 11

God Protects – Isaiah 31:1-9

by Don Hicks



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“Therefore the Lord waits [expectantly] and longs to be gracious to you,

And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.

For the Lord is a God of justice;

Blessed (happy, fortunate) are all those who long for Him [since He will never fail them]” Isaiah 30:18 (AMP).

This verse from the chapter before our focal passage for this Bible lesson gives a great deal of understanding as to how and why God protects those who place their faith under His protection.

The subtitle given in our LifeWay study guides for this lesson is, “God is able to protect His people from enemies.” It could easily be stated God is able to protect me as His adopted child, even in 2020. It would still be a correct statement of fact if it said, “God is able to protect His people (including me personally) from all enemies and no one else is able to do that.”

According to the teachers guide, a key doctrine coming out of this study is expressed well for us in Hebrews 12:9 (ESV):

“Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?” Another important New Testament teaching found in this verse from Hebrews has to do with the Biblical role of fathers in protecting and disciplining their families.

The first verse of our key passage quickly gets down to brass tacks. “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and who depend on horses! They trust in the abundance of chariots and in the large number of horsemen. They do not look to the Holy One of Israel and they do not seek the Lord” Isaiah 31:1 (CSB). Seeking anyone or anything other than the Lord God for help is foolishness.

Isaiah strongly ridicules those of his day seeking help from Egyptians because they are men not God and horses which are flesh and not spirit. Besides, he says, why would we ever expect Egypt to help us after they held us in slavery so long and only released us only when God overcame them? Isaiah recommends turning to the “Lord of Armies” Isaiah 13:4 (CSB), who will protect them by fighting on “Mount Zion and on its hill” (ESV). The Lord of Armies is strong like the lion, even the young lion, who will not run away but only growl even when a whole band of shepherds shout at him hoping the noise will run him off (see the first part of Isaiah 31:4).

Isaiah compares God’s care to the mother bird taking care of her little ones in verse five of chapter 31. Doesn’t that sound similar to Jesus’ teaching about His desire to bring back God’s children who have left following him in Matthew 23:37-39 (ESV): “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Isaiah instructs us how to discern when the rebellious Israelites have returned to the one true God and away from human answers to spiritual battles: "For on that day, every one of you will reject the silver and gold idols that your own hands have sinfully made" Isaiah 31:7 (CSB). In our modern, scientific world we may not have idols of silver and gold to reject, but what about manmade philosophies or feelings that reject the truths of God's Word?

History proves Isaiah was correct: "Then Assyria will fall, but not by human sword; a sword will devour him, but not made by man" Isaiah 31:8 (CSB). A sword made by God Himself will rescue us and those in our nation and world if we will read, accept, and live out the Bible's teachings.

The sword that God has made available to us in Jesus, the Christ, is described in Hebrews 4:12 (KJV): "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."