OPEN

When somebody opens the Word of God or they stand there to teach you or speak to you about God, what kind of a message do you want them to deliver? Do you want a message about visions? Do you want a message about pleasant things? And what if they would bring you a message about the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the judgment of God? Would you like that or would you say, “Go away. I don’t want to hear that”? We’re going to talk about that today because your choice of a message says a lot about where you are with God.

PART ONE

We’re in that awesome book of Isaiah and we’re in the 30th chapter of Isaiah. And the theme for this week is this; that God is waiting to be gracious to those who will wait for Him. So what does that have to do with what kind of a message do you want to hear? Well God is pronouncing “woes” in this segment of Isaiah. He’s pronouncing “woes” on people who are going down
to Egypt, who are making an alliance, but it’s not of God. He’s pronouncing a “woe” on people who are trying to get through life in their own way, by their own devising and trying to escape the judgment that is coming by doing their own thing. And as they do this, they turn around to the prophet and they say to the prophet, “Listen, I am tired of your message.” In essence, “Shut up, it’s not what I want to hear!” You know when we wait for God so that God, who is waiting for us can be gracious to us, when we wait for God, the secret of waiting for God is knowing God, knowing His ways and then saying, “Okay God, I’m going to conform. I’m going to listen to You rather than lean to my own understanding.” Now if you remember where I left off yesterday I left off with Isaiah chapter 30 where he is saying, “Woe [to those that go] down to Egypt….” He says, “[Who seek] refuge in the safety of Pharaoh…,” verse 2, “…and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!” (Isaiah 30:2) Remember, Assyria was threatening them. Remember, it’s about the year 701 B.C. And what has happened is Sennacherib or Sennacherib, however you want to pronounce it, the king of Assyria has come down and taken a lot of Judean towns captive. He has destroyed their fortifications and he has come down. So the people in Judah and Jerusalem are looking for help. And instead of waiting on God and going to God so that God could be gracious to him, instead of listening to what God has already said about Egypt, they are packing all their treasures on their animals and they are headed towards the Negev, which is the southern part; it goes down to the tip of the Red Sea, down to present-day Elat. They’re going down into that Negev and they’re headed for Egypt because they want the help of Egypt. Now remember, I told in the last lesson that Isaiah 20 talks about ah what God is going to do to Egypt and how He is going to take care of Egypt, that he has Isaiah walking around for three years stripped down so that his buttocks are bare so that when people look at him and they’d say, “Isaiah, what are you doing walking around that way without those clothes and without those shoes?” Isaiah can be that living epistle, that living
messenger and say, “This is what God’s going to do to Egypt.” So for three years they have seen and heard what God’s going to do to Egypt. And where are they running to? They’re running to Egypt, whom God is going to defeat, to Egypt, whom God is going to get by the Assyrians. The Assyrians are coming after them. They’re going to Egypt and God has already dealt a blow to one garrison of soldiers that have come up from Egypt and He’s going to deal another blow. And yet they’re running to him. Now watch what it says in verse 6, “The oracle concerning the beasts of the Negev….” The Negev is that southern part, that desert kind of part of Israel. “…Through a land of distress and anguish, from where come lioness and lion, viper and flying serpent, they carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys….” So what they’re doing is they’re getting all their riches, they’re loading them on the backs of these donkeys. They’re grabbing the donkeys and they’re headed down through the Negev through this desert part where there are lions waiting and young lions, and where there are, as he describes it, “…vipers and flying serpents…,” and “…they’re carrying their [treasure] on the back of…donkeys and their treasures on camels’ humps, to a people who cannot profit them.” (Isaiah 30:6) They’re going down to Egypt and Egypt is going to be able to do nothing for them. And even as they go down through the Negev with all these beasts around the Negev they are endangering themselves as they take their treasures and try to buy help from somebody that cannot help them. I want to ask you a question. Where do you invest your money? Are you investing your money in promises that are going to make you rich or are you investing in God? See so many times we make an investment in the name of God, but it’s not for God. It’s for us. It’s for our benefit. God doesn’t like that. You are not waiting on God to allow God to make you prosperous or not to prosper you. And I’m talking about spiritually— but I’m not talking about — give you a lot of money because it wouldn’t be good for you to have a lot of money. God may have a purpose for you right where you are. He may not want you
in another neighborhood. He may want you where you are. But God says that He is waiting to be gracious to you because He is waiting for you to wait for Him. It’s a waiting game. It’s us waiting for God and saying, “I want what You want,” and then God saying, “Okay, because you’re waiting for me and dependent on Me then I can be gracious to you.” Remember our key verse this week is verse 18 of Isaiah 30. “Therefore the LORD longs [the Lord waits] to be gracious to you…therefore he waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are…those who long….” Now remember we saw the word “long”, which means “wait”. “…How blessed are…those who [wait] for Him.” (Isaiah 30:18) All they want is what God wants. And if that’s the way you are, then you’re blessed. Well these people didn’t want this. These people wanted their own way. These people leaned to their own understanding. So he says to them in verse 7, “…Therefore, I have called her…,” they’re going to Egypt. “…whose help is vain and empty. Therefore, I have called her [Egypt] ‘Rahab who has been exterminated.’” (Isaiah 30:7) “Rahab” was a nickname, so to speak, of Egypt. It was a name that said, “Hey, she is do nothing.” Egypt is “do nothing.” They are all talk but they do nothing. They look good but they do nothing. Now Rahab and and you see this in different passages of Isaiah, and we’re going to come to it later in the second segment of Isaiah, but you’ll see Rahab and Egypt are synonymous as God talks about her. As you look at Rahab you also find a character that goes with the leviathan, with the sea monster and it has a bad connotation to it. It has the connotation of pride. It has the connotation of arrogance to it, and so this is what he has called Egypt, “…‘Rahab, who has been exterminated.’” He says, “Now go, write it on a tablet before them and inscribe it on a scroll, that it may serve in…time to come as a witness forever.” (Isaiah 30:7-8) He says, “I want you to take this down. I want you to put this in a permanent form so that it can be a witness forever.” Now Assyria had a library of clay tablets that we can read in this day that go back several
millennium to this time. And as you read those clay tablets there is the record of Assyria’s history. Well God is saying, “Listen, I want this written down as a witness forever that I am speaking to these people and they are not listening to Me.” He says, “For this…,” verse 9, “…is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen to the…LORD; who say to the seers…..” The seers are the prophets. “…You must not see visions’; and to the prophets, ‘You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words, prophesy illusions. Get out of the way, [get out of] the path….” (Isaiah 30:9-11) “Speak no more,” is what he is saying. They don’t want to hear what God has to say. They don’t want to hear about obedience and judgment and righteousness and holiness. They don’t want to hear that. We’ve seen that since the beginning of the book of Isaiah. He says, “…[You] have despised the [words of] the Holy One…..” (Isaiah 1:4) And He tells Isaiah in Isaiah 6, “You are to go and you are to speak to these people, but they are not going to hear. You are to speak to them and they are not going to listen. They have eyes, but they can’t see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. And you are to speak to them until there’s no one left in the cities.” (See Isaiah 6:9-11)Why? Because there is a stump and that stump is the seed. (See Isaiah 6:13) So He’s telling them to go. He is telling them to speak and they’re saying, “I don’t want to hear it. I don’t want to hear it. I want to hear pleasant things. I want to hear nice visions. I want to hear wonderful prophecies. I don’t want to hear the kind of message that you’re bringing.” O Beloved, what do your ears want to hear? They’ll tell you a lot about what’s in your heart. We’ll talk about it more after this announcement.

**PART TWO**

God wanted His people to know that He had spoken and they had not listened. So He said, “I want you to write it on a tablet. I want you to get it down and I want them to remember forever that I have spoken, but they have not listened. I have told them what is going to happen. I have told them that
they are not to go down to Egypt for help in the time of trouble. I have told them that they are not to make an alliance that is not of My Spirit and they have not listened. So write it down and let’s have a record. And I want you to write down also,” and listen carefully, “that they didn’t want to hear My words. They wanted to hear the words of the false prophets.” (See Isaiah 30:1-9) If you and I were to go to the book of Jeremiah. They want the prophets that prophesy dreams and visions and things that are good and things that tickle their ears. This is so typical, Beloved, of the times in which we are living. And this is why God tells Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 4, what he is to do in the light of the times. I believe, Beloved, with all my being that we are getting closer and closer to the coming of the Lord. I believe that it is going to surprise many people. It is going to shock many people. But I believe if you look at the culture of America you can see that as a nation we are simply degenerating and going deeper and deeper into sin. And as Isaiah says we are adding sin to sin. He says it. Let me read it to you again, ’cause I didn’t do it in this lesson. But he says, “Woe to the rebellious children…,” chapter 30, verse 1 “…who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin,” (Isaiah 30:1) and that’s what we’re doing. So God brings them the message, but they won’t listen. They won’t hear. They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. And yet, they are walking according to their own reasoning, their own understanding. Well, let’s compare that with 2 Timothy chapter 4 because I really want to bring this home to you. I don’t want you to think, “Oh, that’s the days of Isaiah. It has nothing to do with us.” Listen, it has everything to do with you. In 2 Timothy we have Paul writing his final and last epistle. He’s writing it to Timothy his son in the Lord. (See 2 Timothy 1:1) And he’s telling Timothy that he’s got to be strong. In chapter 3 he tells him in this letter, and there’s no chapter divisions that, “…realize…in the last days [that] difficult times will come,” (2 Timothy 3:1) and then he describes the character of men.
And as He describes the character of men; they sure are ugly people, the way they live and what they think, and the way they treat their parents and the fact that they have a form of godliness, but they know nothing of the power. (See 2 Timothy 3:2-5) That means that they’re standing up there and proclaiming to be of God, but they really aren’t pure like they should be. They really aren’t righteous. And he comes down and He tells Timothy that evil men and impostors are gonna get worse and worse, but to remember the way that he lived to follow his example. (See 2 Timothy 3:13-15) And then he tells him, now listen, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God….”
(2 Timothy 3:16) I want you to remember that this is God’s book. And then he says in chapter 4, verse 1, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead…by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word….” (2 Timothy 4:1-2) Preach the word, not your visions, not your dreams, not your prophecies, not your pet subject, preach the word. That’s what this program; “Precepts for Life” is all about. It’s about preaching the word of God, the whole counsel of God, teaching you how to discover truth for yourself. That’s why we want you to go to “preceptsforlife.com”, “preceptsforlife.com” and download our study guide. Go online and find out about this Ministry. Find out about the conferences and the tours that we take, where we teach you the Word of God book-by-book so that you really know God. He says “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke….” (2 Timothy 4:2) What is he saying? He’s saying, “Show them what is right and where they’re wrong. Show them whether they’re going to listen or not, you give them the truth.” And he says, [You need to exhort, to challenge them to go on and to be everything they should be. And he says, do it with patience and do it with instruction, with solid instruction and don’t get irritated as you do it.]
(PARAPHRASE 2 Timothy 4:2) And then he says, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound [teaching].” They don’t want sound teaching. “…But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate
for themselves teachers…according to their own desires.” (2 Timothy 4:3) Not according to a desire for holiness or righteousness, not according to a desire to wait upon God, not according to a desire to suffer if necessary, because it is given unto us not only to believe on Jesus but to suffer for His name’s sake. (See Philippians 1:29) There is a future coming and we’re looking toward that future when Jesus is going to rule and reign on the earth. But in the meantime, in between time, it’s not, “Ain’t we got fun,” as the song says. No in the meantime, in between time we’ve got suffering and we’ve got trials, but we can make it through all of those if we will wait for God who waits to be gracious for us, who’s waiting for us to be gracious to Him. So going back to Isaiah chapter 30 it says, “[They] say to the seers, ‘You must not see visions’; and to the prophets, ‘You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words…,”’ tickle our ears, “prophesy illusions.’” (Isaiah 30:10) I mean just what your mind comes up with, what you’ve conjured. We don’t have time to really get into the Word of God. And they say, “Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more [of the words of the Lord.]” (Isaiah 30:11) “I’ve got to be out of church, and my goodness, he has gone five minutes over time.” I cringe when I think that the average message of a pastor is only 20 minutes and at the best 30 minutes on Sunday morning. We’ll do everything else, but listen to the Word of God. And what does it show you? It shows you where we are as a people. He says, “Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, ‘Since you have rejected this word and [you] have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them.’” Them, whom? Them Egyptians. He says, “Therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall [like] a bulge in a high wall whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant.” (Isaiah 30:12-13) You walk past that wall and you keep saying, “Hey there’s a bulge in that wall. Hey there’s a bulge in that wall.” And then all of a sudden the wall comes crashing down on top of you. He says, “Whose collapse is like the [shattering of the] smashing of a
potter’s jar, so ruthlessly shattered that a sherd will not be found among its pieces [that you can use] to take fire from [the] hearth or…scoop water from a cistern.” (Isaiah 30:14) It’ll be so smattered and shattered by God. “For thus [says] the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel…‘In repentance…’” in returning, “‘…and rest you will be saved, in quietness and [confidence] is your strength.’ But you were not willing.”(Isaiah 30:15) O Beloved, be willing. Listen to the pure teaching of God’s Word.