

Thursday, September 19

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Isaiah 30:12 - 33:9

30 **12** This is the reply of the Holy One of Israel: “Because you despise what I tell you and trust instead in oppression and lies, **13** calamity will come upon you suddenly— like a bulging wall that bursts and falls. In an instant it will collapse and come crashing down. **14** You will be smashed like a piece of pottery— shattered so completely that there won’t be a piece big enough to carry coals from a fireplace or a little water from the well.” **15** This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it. **16** You said, ‘No, we will get our help from Egypt. They will give us swift horses for riding into battle.’ But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you! **17** One of them will chase a thousand of you. Five of them will make all of you flee. You will be left like a lonely flagpole on a hill or a tattered banner on a distant mountaintop.” **18** So the LORD must wait for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the LORD is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for his help. **19** O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will be gracious if you ask for help. He will surely respond to the sound of your cries. **20** Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. **21** Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, “This is the way you should go,” whether to the right or to the left. **22** Then you will destroy all your silver idols and your precious gold images. You will throw them out like filthy rags, saying to them, “Good riddance!” **23** Then the LORD will bless you with rain at planting time. There will be wonderful harvests and plenty of pastureland for your livestock. **24** The oxen and donkeys that till the ground will eat good grain, its chaff blown away by the wind. **25** In that day, when your enemies are slaughtered and the towers fall, there will be streams of water flowing down every mountain and hill. **26** The moon will be as bright as the sun, and the sun will be seven times brighter—like the light of seven days in one! So it will be when the LORD begins to heal his people and cure the wounds he gave them. **27** Look! The LORD is coming from far away, burning with anger, surrounded by thick, rising smoke. His lips are filled with fury; his words consume like fire. **28** His hot breath pours out like a flood up to the neck of his enemies. He will sift out the proud nations for destruction. He will bridle them and lead them away to ruin. **29** But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals. You will be filled with joy, as

when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem, the mountain of the LORD — to the Rock of Israel. **30** And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard. He will display the strength of his mighty arm. It will descend with devouring flames, with cloudbursts, thunderstorms, and huge hailstones. **31** At the LORD 's command, the Assyrians will be shattered. He will strike them down with his royal scepter. **32** And as the LORD strikes them with his rod of punishment, his people will celebrate with tambourines and harps. Lifting his mighty arm, he will fight the Assyrians. **33** Topheth—the place of burning— has long been ready for the Assyrian king; the pyre is piled high with wood. The breath of the LORD, like fire from a volcano, will set it ablaze.

31 **1** What sorrow awaits those who look to Egypt for help, trusting their horses, chariots, and charioteers and depending on the strength of human armies instead of looking to the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. **2** In his wisdom, the LORD will send great disaster; he will not change his mind. He will rise against the wicked and against their helpers. **3** For these Egyptians are mere humans, not God! Their horses are puny flesh, not mighty spirits! When the LORD raises his fist against them, those who help will stumble, and those being helped will fall. They will all fall down and die together. **4** But this is what the LORD has told me: “When a strong young lion stands growling over a sheep it has killed, it is not frightened by the shouts and noise of a whole crowd of shepherds. In the same way, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will come down and fight on Mount Zion. **5** The LORD of Heaven’s Armies will hover over Jerusalem and protect it like a bird protecting its nest. He will defend and save the city; he will pass over it and rescue it.” **6** Though you are such wicked rebels, my people, come and return to the LORD . **7** I know the glorious day will come when each of you will throw away the gold idols and silver images your sinful hands have made. **8** “The Assyrians will be destroyed, but not by the swords of men. The sword of God will strike them, and they will panic and flee. The strong young Assyrians will be taken away as captives. **9** Even the strongest will quake with terror, and princes will flee when they see your battle flags,” says the LORD, whose fire burns in Zion, whose flame blazes from Jerusalem.

32 **1** Look, a righteous king is coming! And honest princes will rule under him. **2** Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a parched land. **3** Then everyone who has eyes will be able to see the truth, and everyone who has ears will be able to hear it. **4** Even the hotheads will be full of sense and understanding. Those who stammer will speak out plainly. **5** In that day ungodly fools will not be heroes. Scoundrels will not be respected. **6** For fools speak foolishness and make evil plans. They practice ungodliness and spread false teachings about the LORD . They deprive the hungry of food and give no water to the thirsty. **7** The smooth tricks of scoundrels

are evil. They plot crooked schemes. They lie to convict the poor, even when the cause of the poor is just. **8** But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity. **9** Listen, you women who lie around in ease. Listen to me, you who are so smug. **10** In a short time—just a little more than a year— you careless ones will suddenly begin to care. For your fruit crops will fail, and the harvest will never take place. **11** Tremble, you women of ease; throw off your complacency. Strip off your pretty clothes, and put on burlap to show your grief. **12** Beat your breasts in sorrow for your bountiful farms and your fruitful grapevines. **13** For your land will be overgrown with thorns and briars. Your joyful homes and happy towns will be gone. **14** The palace and the city will be deserted, and busy towns will be empty. Wild donkeys will frolic and flocks will graze in the empty forts and watchtowers **15** until at last the Spirit is poured out on us from heaven. Then the wilderness will become a fertile field, and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops. **16** Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. **17** And this righteousness will bring peace. Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence forever. **18** My people will live in safety, quietly at home. They will be at rest. **19** Even if the forest should be destroyed and the city torn down, **20** the LORD will greatly bless his people. Wherever they plant seed, bountiful crops will spring up. Their cattle and donkeys will graze freely.

33 **1** What sorrow awaits you Assyrians, who have destroyed others but have never been destroyed yourselves. You betray others, but you have never been betrayed. When you are done destroying, you will be destroyed. When you are done betraying, you will be betrayed. **2** But LORD, be merciful to us, for we have waited for you. Be our strong arm each day and our salvation in times of trouble. **3** The enemy runs at the sound of your voice. When you stand up, the nations flee! **4** Just as caterpillars and locusts strip the fields and vines, so the fallen army of Assyria will be stripped! **5** Though the LORD is very great and lives in heaven, he will make Jerusalem his home of justice and righteousness. **6** In that day he will be your sure foundation, providing a rich store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of the LORD will be your treasure. **7** But now your brave warriors weep in public. Your ambassadors of peace cry in bitter disappointment. **8** Your roads are deserted; no one travels them anymore. The Assyrians have broken their peace treaty and care nothing for the promises they made before witnesses. They have no respect for anyone. **9** The land of Israel wilts in mourning. Lebanon withers with shame. The plain of Sharon is now a wilderness. Bashan and Carmel have been plundered.

Galatians 5:1 - 12

5 1 So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. **2** Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. **3** I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. **4** For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace. **5** But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. **6** For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love. **7** You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? **8** It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. **9** This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough! **10** I am trusting the Lord to keep you from believing false teachings. God will judge that person, whoever he is, who has been confusing you. **11** Dear brothers and sisters, if I were still preaching that you must be circumcised—as some say I do—why am I still being persecuted? If I were no longer preaching salvation through the cross of Christ, no one would be offended. **12** I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

Psalms 63:1 - 11

63 1 O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. **2** I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory. **3** Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you! **4** I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer. **5** You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy. **6** I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night. **7** Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. **8** I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely. **9** But those plotting to destroy me will come to ruin. They will go down into the depths of the earth. **10** They will die by the sword and become the food of jackals. **11** But the king will rejoice in God. All who swear to tell the truth will praise him, while liars will be silenced.

Proverbs 23:22

23 22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and don't despise your mother when she is old.