



The main point of chapter 28 was Judah's spiritual rebelliousness. The main point of 29:1–14 was the way in which Judah's sin would be followed by God's rescue. Isaiah 29:15–24 speaks of God's power to transform the lives of men and women.

• A study in the guidance of God

The next three units of the section ¹ go over the same ground but now they include details. It is typical of Isaiah to speak generally first and then repeat himself giving details. Chapter 30 gives us some of the details that were being referred to in chapter 28. The theme is Judah's spiritual rebelliousness, but some details are given. The chapter could be considered as a study in the guidance of God.

¹ 30:1-15;
31:1-32:20;
33:1-35:10

1. It is a mistake to take some major direction in life without consulting God

1. It is a mistake to take some major direction in life without consulting God. Israel acted without seeking God's help.

¹Ah, rebellious children – it is Yahweh's oracle – who carry out plans but not plans that come from me.

When being threatened by the Babylonians, the people of Judah had sent an embassy to Egypt.

They make a way of protecting themselves but it is not from my Spirit.

They are intending to pile up sin upon sin.

²They go down to Egypt without asking for my word; to look for safety in the stronghold of Pharaoh, and to take refuge in Egypt's shadow.

• Judah sent an embassy to Egypt – did not seek God's help

• Fear leads to unbelief, which makes us turn to sinful people for protection instead of turning to God

We make mistakes of this kind when we fear for ourselves. Self-protection tends to lead us into unbelief and we turn to sinful people for protection instead of turning to God. But it does us no good. Isaiah says:

³But Pharaoh's protection will be to your shame, Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace.

⁴Though he has princes in Zoan and his envoys have arrived in Hanes,

⁵everyone will be put to shame cause of a people useless to them, who bring neither help nor advantage, but only shame and disgrace.

• The Israelites have to go through desert-land on the way to Egypt

Isaiah pictures the Israelites going to Egypt. They have to go through the desert-land on the way to Egypt.

⁶An oracle concerning the animals of the Negev:

Through a land of hardship and distress, where there are lions and lionesses, adders and darting snakes, the envoys carry their riches on donkeys' backs, their treasures on the humps of camels, to that unprofitable nation,

⁷to Egypt, whose help is futile and empty. Therefore I call her Rahab the Do-Nothing.

• Worldly help is a waste of time

The point here is that Israel goes to a lot of trouble to get worldly help amidst the nation's problems. But it is all a waste of time. No help will ever come from Egypt (and in Isaiah's day none ever did!).

2. Why is it so wrong to act without consulting God?

2. Why is it so wrong to act without consulting God? It is troublesome. It brings no results. It is a way of death (as we have seen in 28:15). The future will reveal that what Israel is doing is entirely useless.

• It brings no results – a way of death

⁸*Go now, write it on a tablet before them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the time to come for the future, for ever.*

• When Israelites see their mistake they should learn their lesson

Isaiah wants what is happening to be written down because eventually the Israelites will see they are making a mistake to trust in Egypt. When they discover their mistake they should learn a lesson that will be a reminder for God's people for ever.

⁹*For these are rebellious people, sons who fail to be what they ought to be, sons and daughters unwilling to listen to Yahweh's instruction.*

• Rebellious

Why is it so wrong to act without consulting God? It is **rebellious**; it is insulting to God to consult others but not consult him. It is rejecting God's word.

¹⁰*They say to the seers, 'See no more visions!' and to the prophets, 'Give us no more visions of what is right!'*

• Wanting comfort more than wanting God

Why is it so wrong to act without consulting God? It is **wanting comfort more than wanting God**.

'Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions.
¹¹*Leave this way, lead us away from this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!'*

• Forgetting the holiness of God

Why is it so wrong to act without consulting God? It is forgetting the holiness of God. One day the whole scheme of acting without God will collapse dramatically and suddenly.

¹²*Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: 'Because you have despised this message, and put your trust in oppression and depended on what is crooked,*
¹³*therefore this iniquity will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant.*
¹⁴*He will break it in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern.'*

• Scheme will be shattered like a piece of pottery

The whole scheme will be entirely shattered, like a piece of pottery which is smashed into thousands of pieces so small that you cannot use a piece to pick up some coals or scoop up some water.

3. The remedy is to turn to God in faith

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¹⁵For this is what the Sovereign Lord, Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, says:
*'In returning and trustful rest is your salvation,
in quietness and faith is your strength,
but you were not willing.'*

•When we make a mistake we have to admit it and turn back to God

We all make mistakes. Anyone who has never made a mistake has never made anything! But when we go astray we have to admit what we have done and turn around. Turn your life over to God. Begin from where you are and turn your life over to God. Return to God. Rest in him. Do not panic or rush around, adding one mistake to another. Find your strength in God. You were not willing before – but be willing now!