

Inconceivable
Unbelievable
Isaiah 30:1 – 17

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Very direct and specific instructions were provided to all of Israel by YAHWEH. Moses himself told them that they were not to go back to Egypt, ever. That means for anything, unless YAHWEH Himself is the one who says to go, and that did happen for one family later. This is a command that is quickly forgotten as the desire to return to Egypt, to return to the world, never went away. It is a picture of the hold the world has on believers and the desire we have from time to time to return to it. It did not work out for Israel; it does not work out for us either. But that does not stop any of us from thinking that it will work out much better this time around, as we are in control and not the enemy. Right.

Deuteronomy 17:14–16

“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, **nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’**” (NASB95)

These instructions from Moses were clear...right?

Exodus 20:1–3

“Then God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the LORD your God, **who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.** You shall have no other gods before Me.” (NASB95)

Reemphasized and very clear. Egypt is the house of slavery. The people were not to go back to Egypt, rely on Egypt, ally with Egypt or trust Egypt...ever...unless YAHWEH Himself said to do so.

Isaiah too has been crystal clear throughout the book, Judah is not to trust on anyone other than the Lord. The message the nation received in the past was to remain distinctly YAHWEH's and trust only in Him for everything. Joshua provided a warning along these lines with this simple requirement.

Joshua 23:6–13

“Therefore, be very strong to keep and do all that is written in the document of the law of Moses so that you might turn neither to the right nor the left, so that you might not go to these nations left behind, and the names of their gods will not be named among you. Neither shall you in any way bow down to them nor serve them, but to the Lord our God you will hold fast just as you have done until this day. And the Lord will utterly destroy them from your face, nations great and strong, and no one stood before us until this day. One of you has pursued thousands because the Lord our God made war with us just as he said to us. And take very much care to love the Lord our God. For if you should turn back and join these nations that remain with you and make marriages with them and integrate with them and they with you, know that the Lord will not continue to destroy these nations from our face, and they will become to you as a snare and as a stumbling block and as nails in your heels and as arrows in your eyes until you should be destroyed from this good land that the Lord your God gave you.” (Lexham Press 2020, Jos 23:6-13)

The problem with making an alliance with the world is simple, you compromise and become like the world in order to fit in. Therefore, the warnings. Moses was clear in Deuteronomy 7:2, no covenants with the nations. The first mistake was made early on by Joshua who was tricked into it and did not inquire of YAHWEH first.

The history of Judah is replete with cozying up to the world. King Ahaz looked to Assyria for protection from Syria and Ephraim rather than the Lord. He rejected YAHWEH on behalf of the Davidic line and the nation and then turned to other gods.

Leviticus 11:45

“For I myself am the Lord, the God who led you up from the land of Egypt to be yours; and you will be holy, for I myself, the Lord, am holy.” (Lexham Press 2020, Lev 11:45)

To be holy means to be separate and apart. We have trouble with that idea even today. God knew that so He had Paul and John provide clarification for us on the topic.

2 Corinthians 6:14–18

“Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God’s temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: “I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don’t touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” (NLT)

1 John 2:15–23

“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us. But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. So I am writing to you not because you don’t know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” (NLT)

Judah had some real issues with that, so do many who name the name of Jesus Christ today.

Those who name the name of Jesus still enter business partnerships with unbelievers. They still date unbelievers and still insist on marrying unbelievers; then they are shocked when it does not work out. Warning: Missionary dating does not work most of the time. I grew up in a home with an unbelieving parent and that results in issues.

Luke 12:51–53

“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (NASB95)

The bottom line for Judah and for us is because of who we follow, we are already at war with the ones everybody else follows. We are at war.

Having said all of that, here we are in Isaiah 30 and what is the problem? Hardness of heart is the problem. A deliberate and intentional ignoring of what it is YAHWEH has said, multiple times, because we know better.

How often do we know better? Every time we decide to do something without talking to the Lord about it first. Yep, daily.

Proverbs 3:5–6

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight.” (NET)

There is no exception in the scriptures for “except the little stuff.” “Except for BAU stuff.” None of that is there. “All ways” means “all ways.”

A careful study of the scriptures reveals that whenever someone got into trouble, it was because they opted to do something without seeking a word from the Lord first. Just like we do.

Politics in Judah must have been just as pointed as politics are today. You had believers on one side who said trust YAHWEH and He will take care of the issue. On the other side, those who were “realistic” about their chances and hedged their bets by making alliances with whoever they could...including unbelievers.

Real Political Reality in Judah

Then you had those that were living fast and loose as the result of the last failed alliance. They were busy worshipping the foreign god(s) imported to seal the last deal that was done. That group was growing in number as the one thing we see King after King in Judah do is tear down altars of foreign gods but somehow never quite get all of them. Politics you know.

Top Secret Diplomacy...Not

The Assyrian army has not yet invaded Judah. The Northern Kingdom has been taken into exile. Fear is rampant throughout the area. Judah is concerned about their future.

King Hezekiah’s administration is actively working on securing a future for Jerusalem and Judah. Problem: they have not talked with YAHWEH about this. Only because of YAHWEH will there be a successful defense, and then only for Jerusalem.

Diplomats in Hezekiah’s administration are already conducting secret negotiations. No one knows about this...except YAHWEH does. And this is not the first time YAHWEH leaks state secrets to prophets.

4 Kingdoms 6:9–12 (2 Kings)

“Elisha sent to the king of Israel, saying, “Watch out! Do not pass by through that place because Arameans are hidden there.” The king of Israel sent to the place that Elisha had said to him. He watched from there not merely one nor two places. The soul of the king of Aram was enraged concerning this matter. He called his servants and said to them, “Will you not announce to me who has betrayed me to the king of Israel?” One of his subordinates said, “None, O king, my master, except Elisha the prophet who is in Israel. He tells the king of Israel all the words, whatever you say in the inner room of your bedchamber.”” (Lexham Press 2020, 4 King 6:9-12)

Isaiah 30:1–2

““Woe to the rebellious children,” declares the LORD, “Who execute a plan, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin; Who proceed down to Egypt Without consulting Me, To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!”” (NASB95)

So much for that state secret. No one was supposed to know about this, but the Lord does. He starts off recalling the first act of disobedience. Judah did not seek Him and His wisdom first. He calls it sin. Then He goes further and says anything beyond that was adding more sin on top...adding “sin to sin.” There is no spinning out of this one.

The plan which, according to Isa. 29:15, was already projected and prepared in the deepest secrecy, is now much further advanced. The negotiations by means of ambassadors have already been commenced; but the prophet condemns what he can no longer prevent. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 317)

I know how the King must have felt about this. I remember watching live on CNN things which had been state secrets just hours before, live and in color no less.

To YAHWEH, the rebellion is clear. Warnings had been issued for at least the better part of over 500 years. Moses, Joshua and the prophets had all warned. “Without doubt the chief reason for this prohibition was to negate as much as possible the heavy influence such an old and established pagan culture could have had (and did have, if we look at Jeroboam’s bull cult) upon a struggling and culturally deprived people like the Hebrews. So they had not needed a new word from God; they only needed to obey the one they had. But the mind which is set on this world’s ways cannot see the wisdom of God’s ways. To it, rebellion is not rebellion but simply common sense.” (Oswalt 1986, 544-545)

YAHWEH cuts through all the smug self-satisfaction and calls it what it is...rebellion. Remember Isaiah 1:2 “Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, “Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.” (NASB95) Indeed, they have.

So much for the top-secret meetings. The negotiations. The exchange of gifts and payment of money. The acceptance of foreign envoys, foreign operations and all that goes along with that. Like importing foreign gods.

For us today, we don’t wake and say, “today I will rebel against my Lord.” We just exercise what we call...common sense.

We do not bow down before stone idols; we give wholehearted allegiance to the gods of money, power, and sex. Too often our devotion to God is an “add on,” something done in church once a week. Christians are a minority in an increasingly hostile culture. We are exiles, not geographically, but morally and spiritually. (Lutzer 2018, 31)

We allow ourselves to be conquered by the culture little by little. There is no visible army at our doors trying to get in, but if we could see into the unseen realm, we would have a totally different perspective on things and realize what we have imported into our life.

1 Peter 5:6–9

“Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you. Throw all your worry on him, because he cares for you. Be clear-minded and alert. Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him and be firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.” (ISV)

The scriptures tell us that we are in a war. As such, we need to be clear-minded and on the alert for the constant attacks of the enemy. Jesus does post checks you know.

That Christians must be clear-headed and alert, especially as the final apocalyptic end nears, is a constant theme in the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 24:42–43; 25:13; 26:38–41 = Mark 13:34–38; Luke 12:37) and the NT in general (1 Thess. 5:6 uses the same word pair; cf. 1 Thess. 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:5, both of which use “clear-headed,” and Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:5; Rev. 3:2–3; 16:15, all of which use “Be alert”). Two situations call for this alertness: (1) the coming end with the return of Christ, who will reward the faithful and punish those who are not prepared, and (2) the testing of faith, whether from internal desires, demonic attack, or external human pressure (e.g., Mark 14:35–38 and parallels; Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13). Peter has already referred to the need to be “clear-headed” twice (1:13; 4:7); here as there the meaning is not literal soberness as opposed to drunkenness, but a clear-headedness that comes from a freedom from mental confusion or passion. Likewise alertness, which in military contexts refers to a soldier on watch, is opposed to mental and spiritual lethargy (cf. the literal sleepiness of the apostles in Mark) that would prevent one from recognizing and meeting an attack on one’s faith. (Davids 1990, 189)

Instead of seeking instruction and help from the creator of the universe, Judah had turned back to the place of slavery and death seeking protection and life.

That is like a believer turning back to the world for protection, life and guidance. No, God does not help those who help themselves. He helps those who are helpless and know they are. Isaiah had already covered that back in Isaiah 25:4. “For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless is like a rain storm against a wall.” (Isaiah 25:4, NASB95)

No where do we read Judah’s leaders going to the Temple to inquire of God about this.

Just how much of this plan does YAHWEH know about? All of it. Every detail. Nothing is hidden. YAHWEH knows the ambassadors to cut the deal left not long ago and are in the middle of top-secret negotiations at this very moment. He knows the details too.

To prove His point, YAHWEH has Isaiah point out the locations that Judah sent ambassadors to, to cut the deals. Just as the King of Syria complained about Elisha knowing everything, Judah has the same problem, YAHWEH knows everything. Nothing is done in secret...nothing. And He is spilling the beans to Isaiah who is telling everyone.

Isaiah 30:3–5

“Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation. For their princes are at Zoan And their ambassadors arrive at Hanes. Everyone will be ashamed because of a people who cannot profit them, Who are not for help or profit, but for shame and also for reproach.” (NASB95)

Egypt has their own internal problems at this point in history. Seeking help from them will be humiliating as nothing will come of it. Seeking help from people who worship fallen divine beings who themselves are in rebellion to YAHWEH; is a recipe for disaster.

We know Judah is looking for help militarily based on terms used in verses 2 & 3.

The last two prepositional phrases in the verse, “to take refuge in the stronghold of Pharaoh,” and “to shelter in the shade of Egypt,” indicate that the Judean court was seeking military support from Egypt for their revolt against Assyria. (Roberts 2015, 382)

Envoys from Judah had already gone to Hanes and Zoan at the extreme limits of Lower Egypt. Their efforts, however, were wasted. Egypt would prove to be a totally unreliable ally. (Smith 1992, 96)

About the two cities they went to. The names are specific, the order given is specific.

Hanes - Grace has fled; to bring down; to lead down; (root = to bring; to level). (A town located in lower Egypt also called ahpanes = The beginning of the age; Head of the age.) (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 95)

Zoan - A place of departure; a traveler; (roots = he moved tents; he loaded a beast of burden). Removal. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 253)

So Judah goes to “grace has fled” and “removal” to prevent exactly that, removal from the land.

Inconceivable. The spiritual blindness this conveys is unbelievable.

We have the benefit of historical hindsight looking at the proposed arrangement and clearly, this was not in the best interests of anyone other than Egypt.



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)



(Bolen, Tanis, Zoan, Great Temple of Amun, view to east 2012)

Zoan was also home to the great temple to Amun. Amun was identified later by the Greeks as Zeus. “Amun is the god both of preexistence and of creation. This means that he did not create the world out of chaos, but that he transformed himself into the world.” (Assmann 1999, 29)

He was also considered the god of divine kingship, and this around the same time that Judah is looking for an agreement from Pharaoh. Who is the agreement with...really?

Egyptian Geopolitics

Egypt at the time was ruled by the Nubians, whose homeland was far to the south, and their administrative capital in Egypt tended to be at Thebes, perhaps occasionally at Memphis, but not in the Delta. The princes and messengers of the Nubian overlord, then, would have a long trip to meet with the representatives from Judah and possibly other Palestinian states joining in this anti-Assyrian alliance. Isaiah 18:1–2 depicts such an arduous journey of the Nubian envoys in the earlier Ashdod crisis. If the officials of the Nubian overlord were already in Tanis in the eastern Delta and their messengers had even reached Hanes, identified by Kitchen and others, as noted above, as a site even farther east than Tanis, and thus closer to Judah, it suggests that the Nubians and their Egyptian vassals in the Delta were as eager to conclude this anti-Assyrian alliance with their Palestinian supplicants as Judah and the Philistines were. Judah and the other Palestinian parties in the arrangement were eager to gain the military support of a major power as a counterweight to the impressive military might of Assyria, but the Nubians and their Egyptian vassals were eager to create a further buffer between themselves and the Assyrians, whose expansion in the west had begun to threaten both their territorial and their economic interests already in the earlier conflicts of 720 and 715–711 BCE. (Roberts 2015, 383)

Either way, it is all useless, bringing neither help nor advantage. ‘Well, of course!’ Isaiah might have said, for from the feared killer (Assyria) they were seeking help from the proved killer (Egypt)! (Motyer 1999, 219)

Isaiah 30:6–7

“The oracle concerning the beasts of the Negev. 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 And their treasures on camels’ humps, To a people who cannot profit them; Even Egypt, whose help is vain and empty. Therefore, I have called her “Rahab who has been exterminated.”” (NASB95)

Isaiah now shows how silly it is for Judah to be seeking salvation from the world and of all people, Egypt. To help prove his point, Isaiah turns to a bit of sarcasm here in verses 6&7. So, you want to haul all the wealth of Judah through a desert filled with animals who can kill you, so you can engage a people who have nothing to offer you?

Notice the animals of the desert. Lioness and lion, check. Viper, check. Flying serpent...wait a minute. Just what exactly are we talking about now?

Serpent – שָׂרָפִים (sarap), not nacash. Brown Driver Briggs says the word means a “fiery, serpent, usually venomous...a flying serpent, or dragon...seraphim...also Egyptian guardian-griffins...majestic beings with six wings, and human hands and voices, attendant upon. (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 977)

King Tut’s Death Mask

“The death mask of Tutankhamun provides a spectacular example of the uraeus, the uprearing cobra, ironically the symbol of the solar protection of royalty.” (Johnstone 2014, 109)

Based on the context, we are probably talking about a cobra, which can look like a winged serpent. The other thought is we could be talking about seraphim, the same throne guardians Isaiah saw back in Isaiah 6. If that is the case, then the thought being conveyed here is one of judgement to include the involvement of natural forces and the unseen realm as needed, on Judah.

The context though lends itself to poisonous snakes.

The Seraphim are now generally conceived as winged serpents with certain human attributes. The word *śārāp* has three occurrences in the Pentateuch (Num 21:6, 8; Deut 8:15) and four in Isa (6:2, 6; 14:29; 30:6). It is generally taken as a derivative of the verb *śārap*, to “burn”, “incinerate”, “destroy”. Since the verb is transitive, *śārāp* probably denotes an entity that annihilates by burning. While the etymological sense is thus “the one who burns (the enemies etc.)”, the term refers several times to some serpentine being. (Mettinger 1999, 742-743)

The Lord calling Egypt Rahab who has been exterminated is the icing on the cake. Rahab is one of the names in the Old Testament for the chaos monster, the dragon. God defeated chaos prior to creation. The dragon is a defeated being. Ancient civilizations believed this monster lived in the sea and God had already demonstrated His mastery of this so-called monster when He parted the sea allowing His people to cross on dry land and then killing the Egyptian army with the sea again exhibiting, He is the creator and controller of chaos, not some dragon like monster. Rahab becomes a nickname for Egypt in Psalm 87:4.

The problem of the best text can be left aside here, because the prophet’s message is clear: Egypt is like one of the monsters of chaos, but lacks their power. When we take into account the etymology of the name of Rahab proposed above, the words of this text are in fact a *contradictio in terminis*. This can be compared to the mocking song on the king of Babylon in Isa 14, celebrating his downfall into the realm of death. (Spronk 1999, 685)

The language is rather extravagant, but it makes its point well. A caravan loaded with treasures struggles through wild terrain infested with lions and snakes, all to buy the help of an old dragon who is in fact helpless. All the cost in effort and wealth will come to nothing, says the prophet. (Oswalt 1986, 547)

So why go to a has been old dragon who is already dead for help? Why do we do the same?

Isaiah 30:8–10

“Now go, write it on a tablet before them And inscribe it on a scroll, That it may serve in the time to come As a witness forever. For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; Who 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, Prophecy illusions.” (NASB95)

Isaiah now receives instructions from YAHWEH to write down what he has just communicated concerning Egypt. It is to be done in front of the people, so they see him doing this. They are witnesses to the document. Trust is not to be placed on anyone but God.

The reason for writing this down is simple, “...this is a rebellious people.” “Had Israel been an obedient people there probably would have been no need to preserve the prophetic message in writing, for then the mere word of the prophet would have been sufficient. But Israel was not obedient, and for that reason the message must be preserved that the justice of God’s judgment and the truthfulness of His words may be known by posterity, and that the Israelites themselves may have a constant reminder before their own eyes.” (Young 1969, 344)

This record for the future generations would be a lesson. What happens when you obey YAHWEH and remain faithful, versus the disaster you can bring upon yourself if you do not remain faithful. It is needed due to the rebellious nature of those to whom Isaiah is targeting. We need it for today as well.

The people Isaiah is writing to and talking to do not want to hear a word he is saying. This rebellion in their hearts is bad enough that they are called false sons, they are acting like they belong to YAHWEH, but they do not, because they want no part of Him.

The opening phrase of verse 9 also shows us that this has to be God’s word. He gives us the good and bad of His own people. Surrounding nations only give us the good.

About the “false sons.” In the Hebrew, the adjective used is כְּהַשִּׁימִים (kehasim). This means “deceptive, false.” (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 471)

These are deceptive lying false people. They are not true to YAHWEH and are not faithful to Him at all. They are false. In a NT context, we would say they are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

The Hebrew word for sons is rendered “children” in verse 1. It refers to all people, not just males, so a better rendering for this line is “people who lie.” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 794)

These are people who refuse to listen to Torah. They are not followers of YAHWEH. They are rebels, they are scoffers.

They do not want to hear the truth from the prophets. They only want to hear nice things, how they can have their best life now. How YAHWEH intended for them to live a life of joy and victory right now without having to be faithful to Him. They all are suffering from tickled ear syndrome. This is a serious condition and is quite pervasive today among those of the Laodicean set.

2 Timothy 4:1–5

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (NASB95)

Lies of Judah’s and Our Culture

- To find yourself, look within yourself.
- People should not criticize someone else’s life choices.
- To be fulfilled in life, pursue the things you desire most.
- Enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life.
- People can believe whatever they want as long as those beliefs don’t affect society.
- Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is fine. (Kinnaman and Lyons 2016, 57)

Bottom line, the message is being rejected by Judah, and by many who say they are believers, today.

“Who 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, Prophesy illusions.” (Isaiah 30:10, NASB95)

The people are ordering Isaiah and others in his job description, to stop telling them the truth. Tell us pleasant lies that make us feel good about ourselves. Don’t condemn us about our life choices. Affirm us and make us feel accepted about how we are living. “The people prefer the prophets to have visions of unreal things rather than real warnings from Yahweh. They want to hear false things that will make them feel good.” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 796)

How far will people go in order to hear only what they want to hear?

Panspermia

Directed panspermia is even more specific, proposing that these basic forms, or “life-seeds,” were deliberately spread in all directions by some advanced alien race in an effort to begin life wherever they may have landed.

One early promoter of directed panspermia was Francis Crick, one of the co-discoverers of DNA. A committed atheist, Crick once resigned from a collegiate position because the college elected to build a chapel. Crick found his belief in an undesigned, naturally-controlled universe challenged by his discoveries. In particular, Crick found it impossible to believe that DNA could have evolved, based on his knowledge of its structure and the principles of naturalistic evolution. Rather than consider the possibility of DNA being the deliberate construction of an intelligent Creator, Crick mused about ideas like exogenesis, panspermia, and directed panspermia. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013, What Is the Theory of Directed Panspermia?)

Heaven's Gate

Marshall Applewhite (1931–1997) was raised as a Presbyterian and became a Professor of Music in a Christian College in the US. He subsequently became a co-founder of Heaven's Gate Church all of whom committed suicide in 1997 believing they were going to be lifted up to level above human by the comet Hale-Bop. (Scotland 2011, 108)

Judah had their own issues with false gods; on and off worship of Baal (Zeus, Jupiter), Molech, Milcom, Astarte (Queen of Heaven, Aphrodite) and the sun god.

The cult of the Queen of Heaven, as depicted in the book of Jeremiah, was practised in Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (Jer 7:17) as well as among the Judaeans emigrants in Egypt (Jer 44:15). The people of Judah, but also their kings and princes, were devoted to her worship (Jer 44:17). Her cult was a task of the whole family, but the leading role in it was played by the women (Jer 7:18; 44:15, 19). In honour of the Queen of Heaven sacrifices were burned and drink-offerings were poured out (Jer 44:17–19). By the women cakes were made, either in the shape of the (naked?) goddess or of a star, her emblem, or marked with her image or her emblem (Jer 7:18; 44:19). Prosperity and protection against calamities were regarded as the consequences of paying homage to her (Jer 44:8, 17). (Houtman 1999, 679)

The desire of the people, as reflected in their alleged instructions to the prophets, led to their ultimate defeat and removal from the land.

This so-called treaty with Egypt, hard on the heels of Assyrian vassalage, helped to bring in conditions favorable for the Queen of Heaven cult.

YAHWEH was looking out for His people. He knows where the treaties and the playing around with foreign gods leads. There will be more treaties to be sought prior to the final exile to Babylon. Just prior to that, we see this in Ezekiel about conditions in the Temple.

Ezekiel 8:14–16

“Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. He said to me, “Do you see this, son of man? Yet you will see still greater abominations than these.” Then He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house. And behold, at the entrance to the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun.” (NASB95)

Isaiah 30:11

“Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.” (NASB95)

The rebellious people of Judah, the ones who think they are secretly cutting a deal with Egypt, the ones who have turned away from God and now have gone as far as giving instructions to the seers and prophets to lie to them, have provided their final set of requirements. They are no longer interested in following Him. They are okay with religion, thus all the false gods. But false gods do not require holiness from them. False gods encourage the flesh rather than discourage it.

These are shocking statements from God's own people.

Isaiah's particular "offense" is his continual reminder that the God he serves is the Holy One of Israel. A holy God is bothersome because his holiness requires that he be approached with reverent awe and that his worshipers pursue holiness in their own lives. Isaiah has been transformed by his vision of the one honored as "holy, holy, holy," but those to whom he preaches have no interest in duplicating his experience. (Briley 2000-, 36)

The people are demanding false prophets and teachers. They still are today.

2 Peter 2:1–3

"But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed." (NLT)

Isaiah 30:12–14

"Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Since you have rejected this word And have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, Therefore this iniquity will be to you Like a breach about to fall, A bulge in a high wall, Whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant, Whose collapse is like the smashing of a potter's jar, So ruthlessly shattered That a sherd will not be found among its pieces To take fire from a hearth Or to scoop water from a cistern." (NASB95)

Remember, everything since verse 8 has been specifically written down so there will be no excuse. All will read and agree, based on the indictment, judgement was justified.

When the rejecters fall to ruin, their demise can be pictured in two ways.

- A breach in a wall that buckles and crashes down (13). Lives of sinners will come apart, collapsing into ruin.
- A breaking of a vessel (14). Sinners are destined for utter destruction, shattered as a potter's jar into tiny fragments. No piece of a jar remains even to salvage as a kind of dust pan to scrape ashes from a hearth or a scoop to take water from a cistern. (Rosscup 2008, 1104)

Isaiah 30:15–17

"For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing, And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses," Therefore you shall flee! "And we will ride on swift horses," Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift. One thousand will flee at the threat of one man; You will flee at the threat of five, Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top And as a signal on a hill." (NASB95)

Even though the people do not want to hear about Holy One of Israel, YAHWEH goes out of His way to use that designation when talking about the path back to Him.

They have heard "judgement is coming" so long from Isaiah that they no longer want to be told that. But judgement really is coming. The Assyrian army is going to run amok through Judah and take most of Judah away as prisoners. God will show Himself mighty and because of that, some will respond in repentance. We already know though that many will respond inappropriately (Isaiah 22:13), but there will be many, not all, who will see when He deals "...marvelously with this people..." (Isaiah 29:14). There will be a remnant.

Repentance, a turning around and return to YAHWEH, many will experience after He delivers them from Assyria. This will bring some into peace.

Repentance and rest: the word called them back to him. Repentance means 'returning', not a feigned return but one that would really bring them back to rest upon him. Quietness is the absence of panic and restlessness. It is the product not of refusal to face life but of insistence upon taking God into account in trust. This is strength (gěbûrâ), specifically strength for (life's) battle. (Motyer 1999, 221)

All of that being said, after accounting for the remnant we see the following comment about the majority, "...But you were not willing." This will be said again later by Messiah.

Matthew 23:37–39

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' " (NASB95)

Rather than joining the remnant in repentance, the majority will continue to rely upon escape. They will flee on horses, swift ones to boot. Uh, even the discussion about horses is a problem. The King of Israel was not supposed to accumulate horses for his military.

Remember when we discussed why no return to Egypt, there was something else embedded in that verse. "Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'" (Deuteronomy 17:16, ESV)

Zechariah tells us about how the coming King, the Messiah, the one who will rule the world from Jerusalem, how He presents Himself to the people. He is not on a horse, which is a connotation pointing to warfare and military might.

Zechariah 9:9

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (ESV)

When the people say they are going to escape on swift horses, this implies military strength remaining so they can escape. That is not going to be the case. Where will you escape to when all of the places you could go to are in the hands of the enemy? Those who pursue will be swift. Implying, much swifter than you. When Babylon invaded the last time, a large group attempted to escape.

2 Kings 25:4–7

"Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon." (NASB95)

The nation, which had hitherto resembled a thick forest, would become like a lofty pine (törne, according to the talmudic türnĭthâ', Pinus pinea), standing solitary upon the top of a mountain, and like a flagstaff planted upon a hill—a miserable remnant in the broad land so fearfully devastated by war. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 321)

Isaiah committed all of this to writing, just as commanded by God. We have the privilege of reading it today and discover, it is still incredibly relevant for us. Even now, we are seeing the defections from Christ taking place and apostasy becoming the rule.

1 John 1:9–2:6

“If we make it our habit to confess our sins, in his faithful righteousness he forgives us for those sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have never sinned, we make him a liar and his word has no place in us. My little children, I’m writing these things to you so that you might not sin. Yet if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus, the Messiah, one who is righteous. It is he who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world’s. This is how we can be sure that we have come to know him: if we continually keep his commandments. The person who says, “I have come to know him,” but does not continually keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth has no place in that person. But whoever continually keeps his commandments is the kind of person in whom God’s love has truly been perfected. This is how we can be sure that we are in union with God: The one who says that he abides in him must live the same way he himself lived.” (ISV)

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