

Isaiah 30:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

Analysis

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD (הִוֵּי בָנִים סָרֶרִים) /hoy banim sorerim)—The fifth of six woe oracles in Isaiah (28:1, 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1). Hoy is a funeral cry, lamenting those spiritually dead. **Rebellious children** (banim sorerim) echoes Israel's covenant relationship—sons who refuse their Father's authority. Sorer means stubborn, rebellious, turning away (same term for the rebellious son in Deuteronomy 21:18).

That take counsel, but not of me (לְעֵצֶת עָצָה וְלֹא־מִنִּי) /la'atsot etsah velo-minni)—They make plans (etsah, counsel/advice) without consulting Yahweh. The phrase "not of me" emphasizes the source: their wisdom originated from human calculation, not divine revelation. This indicts Judah's politicians negotiating Egyptian alliance against Assyria without seeking God's will. **And that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit** (וְלִטְסֹךְ מַפְכָּה וְלֹא רָוחִי) /velinseok massekah velo ruchi)—Massekah can mean molten image (idolatry) or woven covering (alliance treaty). They weave covenants without God's Spirit guiding. **That they may add sin to sin** (לְמַעַן סְפוֹת חַטָּאת עַל־חַטָּאת) /lema'an sefot chattat al-chattat)—Piling sin upon sin, compounding rebellion. Political scheming without God adds to the original sin of distrust.

Historical Context

Around 705-701 BCE, after Assyrian king Sargon II died, Judah's King Hezekiah considered joining an anti-Assyrian coalition backed by Egypt's 25th Dynasty (Cushite/Ethiopian pharaohs). Isaiah vehemently opposed this, urging trust in Yahweh alone. Hezekiah's ambassadors traveled to Egypt seeking military aid—the very journey Isaiah condemns in verses 2-7. This represented the perennial temptation: trust visible military power (Egypt's chariots and horsemen) rather than invisible divine protection. Egypt had been Israel's oppressor (Exodus), so returning for help was doubly shameful—going back to the house of bondage for security.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you 'take counsel, but not of me' by making plans without seeking God's will through prayer and Scripture?
2. What modern 'Egypts' do we trust instead of God—money, technology, political alliances, human wisdom?
3. How does piling 'sin to sin' happen when one faithless decision leads to another, compounding disobedience?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה	אֶלְעָשָׂה	וְאֵת	הַיְהִי	הַנָּאָם	סּוּרְרִים	בְּנֵי יִם	בְּנֵי	וְאֵלֶּה
Woe	children	to the rebellious	saith	the LORD	that take	counsel	עָזָה	אֵל
H1945	H1121	H5637	H5002	H3068	H6213	H6098		H3808
מִבְּנֵי	לֹא	מִפְּנֵי	רָוחַ	אֵל	מִפְּנֵי	רָוחַ	מִבְּנֵי	
H4480	but not of me	and that cover	with a covering	H3808	but not of my spirit	H7307		
	H5258		H4541					
לֹמְעָן	וְאֵת	סֶפֶר	עַל	מִטְאָתָה				
H4616	that they may add	sin	H5921	sin				
	H5595	H2403		H2403				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 65:2 (Parallel theme): I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Isaiah 1:2 (References Lord): Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Hosea 7:13 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

Isaiah 63:10 (Spirit): But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Romans 2:5 (Parallel theme): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Isaiah 29:15 (References Lord): Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

2 Timothy 3:13 (Parallel theme): But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Isaiah 30:9 (References Lord): That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:

Psalms 61:4 (Parallel theme): I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Jeremiah 5:23 (Parallel theme): But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

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