

Isaiah 30:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Analysis

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee—the divine voice of guidance comes from behind, suggesting God's sovereign oversight of our path, not merely leading ahead but correcting from our past missteps. The Hebrew *dabār* (דָּבָר) means 'word' but carries the weight of divine decree and promise.

This is the way, walk ye in it (זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ לַכֹּחֲבוֹ)—God's *derek* (way/path) is singular and definite. The imperative *lekû* (walk!) calls for active obedience. **When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left**—human tendency to deviate is met with continual divine redirection. This is covenant faithfulness: God doesn't abandon His wayward people but provides persistent guidance. Paul echoes this in Philippians 2:13, 'it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.'

Historical Context

Isaiah 30 addresses Judah's rebellion in seeking Egypt's help against Assyria (circa 705 BC) rather than trusting YHWH. Verses 19-26 promise restoration after judgment—God will become their Teacher again (v. 20). This verse promises intimate divine guidance during the coming return from exile, contrasting their current political deafness to God's counsel.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What spiritual 'deviations' in your life need the correcting voice of God speaking 'behind' you?
2. How does God's promise to guide 'when ye turn' demonstrate both His patience with our wandering and His commitment to keep us on His path?

Interlinear Text

וְאָזְנוֹ יְיָ	תִּשְׁמַע עֲנָה	דְּבַר	יְיָ מֵאַחֲרָיְיךָ	לֵאמֹר	הִיא	
And thine ears	shall hear	a word	behind	thee saying	H2088	
H241	H8085	H1697	H310	H559		
הַדֶּרֶךְ	לֵךְ	כִּי	בְּיָמֶיךָ	תִּמְאֲנוּ יְמֵי	יְיָ	
This is the way	walk ye in it	H0	H3588	when ye turn to the right hand	H3588	
H1870	H3212			H541		
תִּשְׁמָעֵי לָיו:						
and when ye turn to the left						
H8041						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 32:8 (Parallel theme): I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Isaiah 58:11 (Parallel theme): And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Isaiah 42:16 (Parallel theme): And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Deuteronomy 5:32 (Parallel theme): Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Jeremiah 6:16 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Isaiah 48:17 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Joshua 1:7 (Word): Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

Proverbs 4:27 (Parallel theme): Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Isaiah 29:24 (Parallel theme): They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

2 Kings 22:2 (Parallel theme): And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.