



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

Lean on the One Who Holds You, Not on the Stuff You Can Hold

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: **Isaiah 17:1-11;** *2 Kings 16:1-9; Deut. 8:11-18; Hosea 13:6*

We've all had those moments when we feel like we've got to fix everything ourselves—when our security depends on what we can see, hold, or manage. That was Judah's story in Isaiah 17. The people of God kept making alliances, hoping that human strength could replace divine faithfulness. They wanted to lean on what they could hold instead of on the One who was holding them.

Isaiah's word was clear: *"Are you going to trust in the One who made you, or in what you have made?"* Trusting in our own hands always leads to emptiness. Judah's king, Ahaz, had seen God offer help, yet he turned instead to Assyria, trading the treasures of the Temple for a false sense of safety. The Lord was patient, but He would not let His people find rest in what was temporary. Through judgment and mercy, He was saying, *"I'm the only One strong enough to carry you. Stop leaning on what cannot hold you."*

1. WHEN YOU LEAN ON THE WRONG THING, IT WILL ALWAYS COLLAPSE (1-3)

Isaiah begins with the "burden of Damascus." The northern kingdom of Israel—Ephraim—had joined forces with Aram (Syria), and together they seemed powerful. But what they leaned on would soon crumble. *"Behold, Damascus will cease as a city and will become a ruinous heap."* (v. 1) All their impressive alliances, all their clever politics, all their "we've got this" strategies—gone in a moment.

That's the danger of leaning on anything other than God. When our confidence is in our systems, our income, our relationships, or our own ability, those things eventually shake and fall. Ahaz thought Assyria could save him. For a while, it looked like it worked. But the same nation he trusted eventually turned on Judah. Anything that becomes our savior apart from God will soon become our oppressor.

Maybe the Lord allows the things we depend on to crumble—not because He's cruel, but because He loves us too much to let us trust in lies. He's stripping away false strength to bring us back to Himself. When the dust settles, only one Rock remains standing: the Lord Himself.

2. GOD REDUCES US SO THAT WE CAN REMEMBER HIM (4-6)

Isaiah says, *"In that day Jacob's glory will fade, and the fatness of his flesh grow lean."* (v. 4) The picture is of a once-healthy body wasting away—an image of a nation losing its self-made glory. God was allowing Israel's pride to shrink until they realized how frail their own "glory" really was. Then Isaiah switches the image: the harvested field, the beaten olive tree—just a few gleanings left behind. God leaves a remnant, a small trace of life, because even in judgment His purpose is mercy. He's not destroying for destruction's sake; He's pruning so that faith can grow again.

We don't like those seasons when God pares us down, but often they're the most fruitful. When success fades, when reputation is stripped, when resources dry up—that's when

the noise quiets enough for us to hear His voice again. The Lord says, *"You forgot Me when you were full, but now that you're empty, you'll remember who I am."* In His mercy, He reduces us to what's real so that our hearts can return home.

3. WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE FAILS, LOOK TO THE ONE WHO MADE YOU (7-11)

Then comes the turning point: *"In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will turn to the Holy One of Israel."* (v. 7) When everything built by our hands fails, our eyes finally lift to the hands that formed us. The contrast couldn't be clearer: the God who made us versus the gods we make. The idols of our age may not look like Asherah poles, but they're just as deceptive—religious formulas we think will make God act, routines we control, prayers that are more superstition than surrender. But the Lord says, *"Stop looking to what your fingers have made. Look to Me."* The Creator is inviting His creation back into trust.

Isaiah ends this section with a sobering reminder: *"For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and you have not remembered the Rock of your strength."* (v. 10) They planted exotic vines—foreign ideas, foreign alliances—and for a moment, it looked like those vines were thriving. But harvest time revealed only pain. The same is true for us. The seeds we sow in self-reliance might sprout quickly, but they'll wither in the heat of testing. Only what is rooted in God endures.

CONCLUSION

The message of Isaiah 17 still echoes today: stop leaning on what you can hold. Those things aren't bad in themselves, but they were never meant to carry you. Your job, your ministry, your strength, your relationships—all of it must rest in the hands of the One who made you.

Maybe you've trusted your own wisdom or leaned on your own plans. Maybe, like Ahaz, you've given away sacred treasure trying to buy peace from the wrong source. The Lord is calling you back: *"Remember the God of your salvation. Remember the Rock of your strength."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some "modern alliances" we tend to lean on instead of trusting God?
2. Why do you think God sometimes allows what we depend on to fail?
3. How have seasons of "leaning out" (reduction or pruning) revealed God's mercy in your life?
4. In what ways do religious habits or formulas become idols of control?
5. How can we practically remember the "Rock of our strength" in daily decisions?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba, we confess that we've often trusted in what our hands can build instead of resting in what Your hands have already done. Forgive us for forgetting You, the God of our salvation, and for leaning on our own understanding. Strip away every false security until all that remains is You. Teach us to look to our Maker, the Holy One of Israel. Be our Rock, our Strength, our Deliverer. May every part of our lives lean wholly on You. In Yeshua's mighty name we pray, Amen.