

Isaiah Lesson 29

Isaiah Chapter 29

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Introduction: In last weeks lesson in Chapter 28, Isaiah warned the northern kingdom of the impending captivity by the Assyrians. Chapter 29 presents further warning of impending chastisement against Judah and Jerusalem in particular. The reason for the impending chastening is presented. The final third of the chapter looks forward into the Millennium and the blessings of that day for Israel.

I. The Siege of Jerusalem

Isa 29:1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

Isa 29:2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

The name Ariel literally means 'lion of God.' The context makes it clear that this is a name for Jerusalem, for that was the city where David dwelt, and it remained the capital of Judah. The final phrase has the sense of sacrificing routinely for security and vain confidence. They were observing the yearly feasts and offering their yearly sacrifices giving no thought to what the observance of these events were for.

Though Judah continued to go through the motions of the Levitical sacrifices, God pronounced a woe upon Jerusalem in verse 2. God was about to judge Jerusalem and bring heaviness of spirit and sorrow of heart. The final phrase is from the Hebrew text which simply adds Ariel. The thought simply is that such distress was about to fall upon Ariel (i.e., Jerusalem).

Isa 29:3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

Isa 29:4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

Though the general context of the preceding chapters has been of the Assyrian invasion, that does not seem to be in view here. When Assyria did invade Judah, God prevented them from actually besieging the city of Jerusalem. The thought here may look forward to the coming Babylonian invasion when Judah was not only invaded but conquered and deported.

In that day, God warned, that they would be as dead men that speak through a familiar spirit from the dust of the ground. The haughtiness of Jerusalem would be soon humbled to the dust. They would be forced to mutter there like unto the wizards of that day. They would be brought down altogether.

Isa 29:5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

Isa 29:6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

Those who were in and around Jerusalem that were foreigners would be removed. The word translated as strangers is in reference to 'foreigners.' The foreign invaders of Jerusalem would be as numerous as the dust of the ground or the chaff of the harvest. Their conquest would be sudden.

The coming judgment of God by the Babylonians would be like natural disasters: thunder, earthquakes, storms, and fire. God would send invaders which would sweep across the land like an earthquake or a violent thunderstorm.

Isa 29:7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

Isa 29:8 It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

Nightmarish times were coming. Not only would the Babylonians fight against Judah and Jerusalem, but other nations would as well. In the course of history, the Persians also ruled over conquered Judah followed by the Greeks and then the Romans. What lay ahead for rebellious Jerusalem was like a nightmare.

The day was coming when Jerusalem would dream of having food and water only to waken to find out the real nightmare was still taking place. More than one empire would be the enemy of Jerusalem. The fulfillment of this prophecy will not be complete until the Messiah returns in power and great glory. It is still on going.

Isa 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

Isa 29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

God begins to enumerate reasons for His impending judgment. God, through the prophet, essentially instructed Judah to stop and consider why they would be chastened. Their judgment was clouded. They were intoxicated, but not with alcohol. The deep sleep mentioned undoubtedly refers to the curse placed upon Israel, noted in Isaiah 6:9-10.

Isa 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Isa 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

The Apostle Paul referred to the same in Romans 11:7-8 as well as in II Corinthians 3:14-15. Jesus referred to the same in Matthew 13:13-15 and John 9:39.

Mat 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Mat 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Mat 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

II. Israel Blind to the Vision as if Sealed up

Isa 29:11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

Isa 29:12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

Israel had become blind by their long rebellion against God. God formalized this blindness as noted in Isaiah 6:9-10. Similarly, the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Blindness in part is “happened upon Israel until the fulness of the gentiles be come in.” (Romans 11:25).

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Israel (then and now) gave lip service to God, but in fact their hearts were far from him. Their ‘fear of God’ was only by a hollow prescription taught by their rabbis. . Jesus quoted this in Matthew 15:8-9 in direct application to official Israel then. See also Mark 7:6-7.

Because of their hypocrisy, God warned, “Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” God would deal against Israel such that many would be astonished. (They would marvel).

The wisdom of their rabbis and scribes would perish. That has not fully been accomplished. When Christ returns, the dead system of rabbinical Judaism will be abolished.

Isa 29:15 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?

Isa 29:16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

God assigns another woe against the deadness of rabbinical Judaism. In fashion like the chambers of their imagery found in Ezekiel, God warned of secret theology and secret societies. See Ezekiel 8:12.

Eze 8:12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

Such things developed during the Babylonian captivity and continue to this day. Like a potter who turned his work upside down, so Israel had turned from their God. Like the folly of a piece of pottery which denied its maker, so Israel had turned from their Creator and God.

Isa 29:17 Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

Isa 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

The chapter now shifts to the Day of the Lord and the blessings of God upon Israel in that day. As the context will make clear, this is a reference to the Day of the Lord. Even Lebanon will be blessed in that day. The forests of Lebanon will be restored. "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness."

In our Lord's earthly ministry, a partial fulfillment of this was exhibited authenticating His heavenly nature. See Matthew 15:31 and Mark 7:37. When Jesus returns, this fulfillment will be the norm throughout His millennial kingdom.

III. Meek Shall Increase Their Joy in the Lord

Isa 29:19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Isa 29:20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

Isa 29:21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Conditions in the kingdom are further noted. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." This verse surely will be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. See Matthew 5:3.

Mat 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Satan will be bound. The scorner is consumed. Those who have taken the mark of the beast will be cast into hell. Those who would continue to act upon their imagination will cease to do so. They will obey the Lord. Some for all eternity, Some until Satan be loosed for a season. Sin will not be tolerated in that day when Jesus rules with a rod of iron. Righteousness will prevail in that day.

Isa 29:22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

Isa 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

Isa 29:24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

In the Millennium, Israel (the house of Jacob) will no longer be ashamed or pale in that day. Israel will be exalted as the capital nation of the world. In the Kingdom of God (i.e., the Millennium), when greater Israel sees their own children, they will praise God and fear the God of Israel. In that day, all Israel will be right with God and all will trust their Messiah as their Lord and Savior.

Come that day, even those in Israel which resisted the knowledge of Christ will come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. They will submit themselves to the true righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. What a blessed day that will be!

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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