

# Offering Hope for the Future

Isaiah 29:13-24

SS Lesson for 05/09/2021

**Devotional Scripture:** Jer 29:10-14

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Isa 29:24*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### FALSE PROFESSION OF FAITH (ISA 29:13-16)

*False because of not being sincere (13)*

Not sincere because of forsaking God's commands (Isa 58:2)

Not sincere because of not putting into practice their faith (Ezek 33:31)

Not sincere because of man's tradition (Matt 15:3)

Not sincere because of hypocrisy (Ps 78:36)

Not sincere because of turning to a different faith (Gal 1:6)

*False because of earthly wisdom (14-15)*

Earthly wisdom does not glorify God (Rom 1:20-23)

Earthly wisdom does not understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14)

Earthly wisdom is of the devil (John 8:44)

Earthly wisdom perverts the ways of God (Acts 13:10)

*False because of pride (16)*

Because God detests the proud (Prov 16:5)

Because pride keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)

Because pride makes man think he is wise (Prov 26:12)

Because pride comes before destruction (Prov 16:18)

#### FUTURE PROSPECT FOR JUSTICE (ISA 29:17-21)

*Justice through fruitfulness (17)*

Fruitfulness through being committed to God (Ps 37:3-7)

Fruitfulness through walking the way of God (Deut 5:33)

Fruitfulness through working as for the Lord (Col 3:23-24)

Fruitfulness through being obedient to God's Word (James 1:25)

*Justice through insight (18)*

Insight that comes from righteous wisdom (Ps 37:30)

Insight that comes from the plans of the righteous (Prov 12:5)

Insight that comes from doing right (Prov 21:3)

Insight that comes through obedience (Ps 119:98-100)

*Justice through humility (19)*

Humility through God's grace (James 4:6)

Humility before God (James 4:10)

Humility by considering others interest before our own (Phil 2:2-4)

Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)

*Justice through God's judgment (20-21)*

God's judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)

God's judgment judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)

God's judgment is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)

God's judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)

#### FAITHFUL PROMISE OF HOPE (ISA 29:22-24)

*Hope for God's redemption (22)*

Redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23)

Redemption through Jesus' blood (Eph 1:7)

Redemption from the dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)

Redemption from the law (Gal 4:4-5)

*Hope because of God's grace (23)*

God's grace is a gift (Eph 2:8)

God's grace provides salvation to all men (Titus 2:11)

God's grace is a reason to rejoice and have hope (Rom 5:1-2)

God's grace overflows (Rom 5:15)

#### *Hope through God's word (24)*

Hope through God's word by its encouragement (Rom 15:4)

Hope through God's word by its promise of salvation (Ps 119:81)

Hope through God's word by the gospel (Col 1:23)

Hope through God's word by it introducing a better hope (Heb 7:19)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A predominant theme of the book of Isaiah is God's sovereignty over history. The fictitious pagan fertility gods were imagined to be caught in never-ending cycles of birth, life, and death. For pagans, history endlessly turned on itself. Their gods were doomed to the same repetitive beats as were mere mortals. By contrast, the God of Israel stood outside of history. Since he brought all things into being (Isaiah 40:21-31), how could it be otherwise? He demonstrated mastery over history by giving Isaiah visions of what would occur before, during, and after the Babylonian exile. That tragedy extended from the destruction of the temple in 586 BC until release from captivity in 538 BC. The most immediate new thing that God would do was to use a foreign power, Assyria, to accomplish his will by disciplining Israel for their sin and corruption. During Isaiah's tenure as a prophet (740-681 BC), Assyria was the region's sole superpower. Founded in Mesopotamia in about 1750 BC, that nation's period of most militant expansion began in about 1100 BC. Assyria's most coveted prize, Egypt, lay to the west. However, several smaller nations on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including the divided northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah, stood in its path. The risk of invasion was constant. Two centuries before Isaiah's time, King Solomon had accumulated immense wealth through his initiative of international commerce. That fact, along with prosperity in the interim, made the covenant people an attractive target for the aggressive Assyrian Empire. Both Israel and Judah experienced years of prosperity after they divided into two kingdoms (Isaiah 2:7; etc.). Assyria menaced both for years. The threat diminished during the reigns of less bellicose Assyrian monarchs. However, TiglathPileser III (reigned 745-727 BC) renewed Assyrian designs against both Israel and Judah (2 Kings 15:29). The prophets Hosea and Amos had issued the earliest warnings, in the eighth century BC (examples: Hosea 10:6; Amos 3:11). At the time, their prophecies must have been seen as outlandish to a nation enjoying peace. But during Isaiah's ministry as a prophet, predicted doom became reality. Ahaz, king of Judah from 735 to 715 BC, allied with Assyria to foil aggression by Aram and northern Israel, paying steep tribute in the process (2 Kings 16:7-8). Eventually, however, he felt pressure to rebel against Assyria and shift allegiance to Egypt. The prophets warned both northern Israel and southern Judah against such entanglements, but they were ignored (Hosea 7:11, 16; etc.). God instructed both nations to place their trust in him, not pagan empires and their fictitious gods. Beginning in the period of Hezekiah's reign (about 724-695 BC), Isaiah preached five "Woe Sermons" that included further warning against such alliances. These five sermons are found in Isaiah 28:1-33:24, each opening with the word Woe (28:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1). The sermons establish the rationale behind God's judgment, yet also offer hope that God would someday restore the nation predicted to fall. Today's study concerns both. Leading into today's text is a sad observation regarding ignorance of the Word of the Lord as delivered through the prophet (Isaiah 29:11-12).

### Key Verse: Isa 29:24

*These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

**29:1-4.** In this second of five "woes" in chapters 28-33 Isaiah continues with the theme of the last part of the first woe (28:14-29). Judgment was coming on Jerusalem and on Judah, and its purpose was to get the nation to return to God. Unlike the judgment that would sweep away the Northern Kingdom, this judgment on Jerusalem, though very severe, would be averted by the Lord. Jerusalem would not fall into the hands of the Assyrians. **Ariel** undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem as can be concluded by the parallel phrase **the city**

where David settled (cf. 2 Sam. 5:7, 9, 13). Many interpreters say **Ariel** means “lion of God,” in which case the city is seen as a strong, lionlike city. Ariel may also be translated “altar hearth,” as in Isaiah 29:2; Ezekiel 43:15-16. Jerusalem is the place where the altar of burnt offering was located in the temple. Though Jerusalem is where **festivals** were celebrated before God (Isa. 29:1), the city would be besieged and fighting and bloodshed would turn it into a virtual **altar hearth**. Though the Assyrians under Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem in 701 B.C. it was as if God had done so (**L... I... I... My**, vv. 2-3). Being humiliated (**brought low**), Jerusalem spoke softly rather than in loud tones. Though Jerusalem would be surrounded it would not be taken at this time. This assurance should have encouraged the people to trust God and to worship Him properly.

**29:5-8.** Jerusalem’s protection described in these verses refers to her deliverance from Assyria, recorded in chapter 37. It would have seemed impossible to hope that the Assyrians would not take the city. Only by God’s sovereign intervention was Jerusalem spared. Though 29:5-8 refers to the Assyrian soldiers becoming **like... dust** and **chaff** when they were slaughtered, these verses also seem to have eschatological overtones. At the end of the Tribulation when **nations** (vv. 7-8) will **attack** Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-3), **the LORD Almighty will come** and destroy each attacking nation. The threat of those **nations** will vanish like a **dream**. When the Assyrian soldiers were destroyed in Isaiah’s day, no doubt the people of Jerusalem were delirious with joy. But shortly the difficulty of that situation subsided in their thinking, and life returned to normal. Rather than turning back to God the nation got more deeply involved in sin.

**29:9-12.** The Jerusalemites’ spiritual insensitivity was in itself a judgment from God. The people were told to **blind** themselves (v. 9) but **the LORD** also caused the blindness (v. 10). The fact that **the prophets** and **the seers** did not see and understand clearly was part of God’s judgment. They did not understand God’s revelation about His judgment on the Assyrians that Isaiah recorded on a **scroll** (vv. 11-12). No one, either people **who could read** or those who couldn’t, could understand this truth.

**29:13-14.** The **people** of Jerusalem, professing to know God, were formally involved in acts of **worship** but they did not worship God from **their hearts**. They were more concerned with man-made legalistic **rules** than with God’s Law, which promotes mercy, justice, and equity. Because of that, God would judge them; their **wisdom** would **vanish**.

**29:15-16.** God pronounced **woe** on those who thought He did not see their actions. They attempted to **hide their plans from** God by doing things at night. They were not thinking clearly, for God can hide things from man (vv. 10-12) but not vice versa. Such thinking twisted the facts and confused **the potter with the clay**. A jar, however, cannot deny that the potter made it, or say that **the potter** is ignorant (cf. 45:9; 64:8). Actually the *people* knew **nothing** of what was going on, but *God* always knows everything.

**29:17-21.** However, things in the future will be different. The phrase **in a very short time** refers to the coming millennial kingdom. Some think it refers to the time when the Assyrian army was slaughtered (37:36), but the conditions described in 29:20-21 seem to nullify that interpretation. **Lebanon**, which was then occupied by Assyrian troops, will eventually be productive (**fertile**) again. The second occurrence of the words **fertile field** may refer to Mount Carmel. When the Millennium comes **the deaf and the blind... will hear and see** (cf. 32:3; 35:5). This contrasts with 29:10-12, which referred to the nation’s impaired sight. **The needy will rejoice in the LORD** because of what He will do for them, and conversely **the ruthless** who deprived **the innocent of justice** will be punished (vv. 20-21; cf. v. 5).

**29:22-24.** The attitude of the people of Jerusalem and Judah will completely change. They will **no longer... be ashamed** (v. 22) or brought low (v. 4) by foreign domination and their own sin (cf. 1:29). As **their children** grow up in safety they will realize that God has protected them and will worship (**stand in awe of**) Him. The Lord’s delivering them from Sennacherib was a foretaste of the ultimate deliverance they will experience. People **who are wayward** and **who complain** will change and **will accept instruction**. No longer will blindness prevail; then they will know God’s ways (cf. 29:18).

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **False Profession of Faith (Isa 29:13-16)**

13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,  
14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."  
15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"  
16 Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; for shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

### **False because of not being sincere (13)**

*Not sincere because of forsaking God's commands (Isa 58:2)*

2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

*Not sincere because of not putting into practice their faith (Ezek 33:31)*

31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.

*Not sincere because of man's tradition (Matt 15:3)*

3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

*Not sincere because of hypocrisy (Ps 78:36)*

36 But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues;

*Not sincere because of turning to a different faith (Gal 1:6)*

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

### **False because of earthy wisdom (14-15)**

*Earthy wisdom does not glorify God (Rom 1:20-23)*

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

*Earthy wisdom does not understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14)*

14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

*Earthy wisdom is of the devil (John 8:44)*

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

*Earthly wisdom perverts the ways of God (Acts 13:10)*

10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?"

### **False because of pride (16)**

*Because God detests the proud (Prov 16:5)*

5 The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

*Because pride keeps one from seeking God (Ps 10:4)*

4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

*Because pride makes man think he is wise (Prov 26:12)*

12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

*Because pride comes before destruction (Prov 16:18)*

18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

### **Future Prospect for Justice (Isa 29:17-21)**

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

18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

19 The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nothing, the scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off

21 Who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just by empty words.

### **Justice through fruitfulness (17)**

*Fruitfulness through being committed to God (Ps 37:3-7)*

3 Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. 4 Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: 6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

*Fruitfulness through walking the way of God (Deut 5:33)*

33 Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

*Fruitfulness through working as for the Lord (Col 3:23-24)*

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

*Fruitfulness through being obedient to God's Word (James 1:25)*

25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.

## **Justice through insight (18)**

*Insight that comes from righteous wisdom (Ps 37:30)*

30 The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just.

*Insight that comes from the plans of the righteous (Prov 12:5)*

5 The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.

*Insight that comes from doing right (Prov 21:3)*

3 To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

*Insight that comes through obedience (Ps 119:98-100)*

98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. 99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. 100 I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

## **Justice through humility (19)**

*Humility through God's grace (James 4:6)*

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

*Humility before God (James 4:10)*

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

*Humility by considering others interest before our own (Phil 2:2-4)*

2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.  
3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.  
4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

*Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)*

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

## **Justice through God's judgment (20-21)**

*God's judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)*

2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

*God's judgment judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)*

7 The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. 8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

*God's judgment is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)*

17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

*God's judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)*

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

## **Faithful Promise of Hope (Isa 29:22-24)**

22 Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale;

23 But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel.

24 These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine."

### **Hope for God's redemption (22)**

*Redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23)*

23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

*Redemption through Jesus' blood (Eph 1:7)*

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

*Redemption from the dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)*

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

*Redemption from the law (Gal 4:4-5)*

4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

### **Hope because of God's grace (23)**

*God's grace is a gift (Eph 2:8)*

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

*God's grace provides salvation to all men (Titus 2:11)*

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

*God's grace is a reason to rejoice and have hope (Rom 5:1-2)*

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

*God's grace overflows (Rom 5:15)*

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

### **Hope through God's word (24)**

*Hope through God's word by its encouragement (Rom 15:4)*

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

*Hope through God's word by its promise of salvation (Ps 119:81)*

81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.

*Hope through God's word by the gospel (Col 1:23)*

23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

*Hope through God's word by it introducing a better hope (Heb 7:19)*

19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable**

#### **Verse 1**

Isaiah addressed this oracle to Ariel (lit. altar hearth, cf. Ezekiel 43:15-16). Another meaning, "lion of God" (cf. Isaiah 31:4; Genesis 49:9; 2 Samuel 23:20; 1 Kings 10:19-20; 1 Chronicles 11:22), was probably not intended here since Isaiah described Ariel as the place where Israel's religious festivals took place. Clearly Ariel refers to Jerusalem, the city where David set up his headquarters (cf. 2 Samuel 5:9), and Mount Zion (Isaiah 29:8), the site of Judah's worship.

"Jerusalem prides itself as being God's altar-hearth, the very heart of the only cult [system of worship] that pleases him. But, in fact, God is not pleased at all." [Note: Oswalt, p526.]

The city also boasted of its heritage in David, but the present residents did not share David's heart for God (cf. Isaiah 29:13). The prophet directed the city to continue to observe its annual religious feasts regularly. This seems to be a sarcastic call to continue offering the sacrifices, which the people thought assured their blessing by God, even though they were doing so as an empty ritual (cf. Isaiah 29:13). These meaningless acts of worship would not avert judgment to come (Isaiah 29:2; cf. Hosea 8:11-14; Amos 4:4-5).

"The true poignancy of the "woe" here lies in the fact that the God who had enabled David to take it would now besiege this city himself, through its enemies (Isaiah 29:5), and cause its destruction by fire just as if the whole city had become an extension of the [brazen] altar hearth within its temple." [Note: Grogan, p187.]

#### **Verse 2**

The Lord would bring the city into distress, lamentation, and mourning. It would become like an altar hearth in that it would become a place of death.

"If we treat lightly the sacrifices God has made available (and in the Christian era, The Sacrifice) then we ourselves become the sacrifice. If we will not accept God's substitution, we must carry the burden of our own sin (Hebrews 10:26-27; Romans 8:11-13)." [Note: Oswalt, p527.]

#### **Verse 3**

Yahweh would bring Jerusalem under siege. David had camped there (Isaiah 29:1), but God would camp there too. This probably refers to His use of Sennacherib and the Assyrians for this purpose in 701 B.C, though other armies also besieged Jerusalem (cf. Daniel 1:1).

#### **Verse 4**

Both the status and the strength of the city would suffer humiliation. The people's weak voices would reflect their abject condition under Yahweh's sovereign discipline.

#### **Verse 5**

God would powerfully blow away the enemy, who would be as numerous and insignificant as dust and chaff, even though the enemy built great ramparts and siege towers to storm Jerusalem. His deliverance, like that of a storm, would be very quick (cf. Isaiah 37:36). God would judge those whom He had sent to judge His people. God will do a similar thing at the end of the Tribulation (cf. Zechariah 14:1-3).

#### **Verse 6**

The Lord Himself would be directing Jerusalem's judgment. He would use the audible, the visible, and the invisible, to shake, remove, and consume the city. These are probably not the instruments that He would use as

much as expressions of His sovereign power. This is the classic language of theophany in which images express God's powerful intervention in the world (cf. Exodus 19:16-19; 1 Kings 19:11-13; Ezekiel 20:47-48).

#### **Verse 7**

However, eventually "all" the enemies of Israel would vanish, just as the subject of a nightmare disappears when one wakes up (cf. Isaiah 37:36-37). This points beyond the Assyrian invasion and includes all similar attempts to destroy Jerusalem in the future. The events of 701 B.C. were a partial fulfillment, but the ultimate fulfillment is still future (cf. Revelation 20:8-9). The Exodus was a similar earlier deliverance.

"Sennacherib's forces lifted the siege to fight the Egyptians at Eltekeh. It was on their return from that victorious engagement that the devastating stroke of God here predicted fell upon them." [Note: Archer, p629.]

#### **Verse 8**

Israel's attackers would also dream of devouring their enemy, of drinking them down, but when they awoke to reality they would discover that their desires were unfulfilled. Israel has proved to be an elusive enemy, by God's grace, throughout history.

#### **Verse 9**

Jerusalem's leaders would delay (actually, "be delayed," by their lack of perception) and wait to act in faith because they were spiritually blind and drunk (cf. Isaiah 6:9-10). Isaiah was apparently speaking to them ironically again (cf. Isaiah 29:1). If the people of Jerusalem failed to see the importance of trusting God in the face of enemy attack, and failed to trust Him, they would find it even more difficult to see His will and do it later. When people see the will of God and refuse to do it, they become incapable of seeing it and doing it further (cf. Acts 28:26-28; Romans 1:24; Romans 1:26; Romans 1:28; Hebrews 4:1-11). This is serious spiritual blindness and drunkenness.

#### **Verse 10**

The people already found it more difficult to see God's will and act obediently because God had shut their eyes and covered their heads (cf. Isaiah 6:9-10; 1 Samuel 26:12; 1 Kings 22:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). He had not given most of their prophets and seers insight into what was coming that they could share with the people. Isaiah and a few other faithful spokesmen were the exceptions. ". . . determined spiritual insensitivity becomes judicial spiritual paralysis." [Note: Motyer, p239.]

#### **Verses 11-12**

"The entire vision" probably refers to the whole Book of Isaiah. [Note: Watts, p386.] God would hide His will from those who could know it but did not have the spiritual discernment to understand it. This would lead the people to appeal for an interpretation of His will for those who did not even have the intellectual ability to understand it. In other words, God would hide His plans from the people completely because all of them were spiritually obtuse, the literate and the illiterate.

#### **Verse 13**

The Lord had observed that the people of Jerusalem were going through the motions of worship without a vital, daily relationship of trust and obedience with Him. Their worship was a matter of traditional ritual observance, rather than a heartfelt desire to interact with Him (cf. Matthew 15:9; John 4:23-24).

#### **Verse 14**

Therefore He would again deal with them in a way that would cause others to marvel, as He had done in the past when they sank to this level. Their wise men would not be able to view life from God's perspective, and their discerning men would not be able to see through things to the real issues (cf. Isaiah 28:29). Inability to see would be their punishment for choosing not to see (cf. Isaiah 5:21; Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 26:7-10; 1 Corinthians 1:19).

#### **Verse 15**

"Woe" announces divine condemnation of another trait of the Jerusalemites: their habitual and determined decision to try to hide from God (cf. Genesis 3:8). The political strategists seem to be particularly in view. [Note: Ibid, p389.] They tried to hide their plans from the Lord so they could be their own masters, as they thought, to live as they pleased rather than as He instructed them. Previously King Ahaz had tried to hide his appeal to Assyria for help (ch7).

The remedy for this spiritually blind state is the subject of the next "woe" ( Isaiah 29:15-24). It begins with a word of condemnation for deception ( Isaiah 29:15-16), proceeds to explain what God will do ( Isaiah 29:17-21), and ends with a summary statement ( Isaiah 29:22-24).

#### **Verse 16**

These politicians turned things upside down. They denied the Lord's distinctiveness, sovereignty, and Wisdom of Solomon -and attributed those characteristics to themselves (cf. Isaiah 29:14; Isaiah 45:9; Isaiah 64:8; Genesis 2:7; Jeremiah 18:1-6; Romans 1:25; Romans 9:19-21). They told the Lord what to do rather than trying to discover what He wanted to do. "It is the forgetting of God's right as Maker that leads to ethical relativism." [Note: Oswalt, p537.]

#### **Verses 17-18**

The Lord would demonstrate His distinctiveness, sovereignty, and wisdom soon by reversing the conditions of the proud and the humble, symbolized by the forest and the field (cf. Isaiah 2:13; Isaiah 10:34; Isaiah 33:9; Isaiah 35:2; Isaiah 37:24; Isaiah 60:13; Matthew 5:5). This change will be literal in the Millennium. Note the mention of "just a little while" and "on that day," phrases that often introduce eschatological conditions. The deaf would hear and the blind would see (cf. Isaiah 29:9-12; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4). Isaiah's point was that only God could do these things, not man. The fact that Jesus Christ was able to do this shows that He was God. "Lebanon probably represents man in his self-pride." [Note: Archer, p630.]

#### **Verse 19**

The Lord would also cause the afflicted and the needy to be happy in the Holy One of Israel (cf. Matthew 5:3). True joy in worship would appear (cf. Isaiah 29:13; Revelation 22:1-5).

#### **Verses 20-21**

God will destroy the mighty as well as elevate the helpless (cf. Isaiah 29:17). He will correct social ills. The samples of wicked behavior that Isaiah offered have been all too prevalent throughout history. The ruthless are unscrupulous in wielding their power (cf. Isaiah 29:5; Isaiah 13:11; Isaiah 25:3-5). Scorners deny moral absolutes (cf. Isaiah 28:14; Isaiah 28:22). Those intent on doing evil bend law and order to achieve their ends. Specifically, those who abuse the legal system by committing perjury, tampering with witnesses, and withholding protection from the innocent will come to an end. The prophet pictured false witnesses, crooked lawyers, and corrupt judges (cf. Hosea 4:1-2; Amos 2:6-8; Amos 5:10-11; Micah 2:1-2).

#### **Verse 22**

The Lord, who began a good work of redemption in Abraham, would bring it to completion (cf. Philippians 1:6). Jacob may have felt embarrassed by all that his descendants had done, as-Isaiah suggested-Jacob looked down from heaven on them. But he would no longer feel ashamed of them, or fear God's dealings with them, when he saw the transformations that God would make in them. They would finally trust in the Lord as they should.

#### **Verse 23**

The Lord would halt the downward course of the history of Jacob's family, and transform them. The Israelites would at last confess their God as holy and acknowledge His holiness as central in their lives. They would be fruitful rather than barren. The text gives no basis for interpreting the people in view as the spiritual seed of Jacob, the church. [Note: This was the view of Young, 2:332.] "It is awe inspired by wondering gratitude that will bring about this profound sense of "the godhood of God." It is this deep awareness of God's goodness to them as a nation that will produce a penitent and receptive spirit in those formerly wayward and complaining." [Note: Grogan, p191.]

#### **Verse 24**

Those who are the work of God's hands, the Israelites, will demonstrate steadfastness in their lives. Their formerly incorrect understanding will be straightened out. Those who have been critical, feeling superior, will accept instruction. Deliverance leads to praise, which results in understanding, just as lack of understanding leads to pride resulting in judgment. "Just as Abraham was separated from the human race that was sunk in heathenism, to become the ancestor of a nation of Jehovah, so would a remnant be separated from the great mass of Israel that was sunk in apostasy from Jehovah; and this remnant would be the foundation of a holy community well pleasing to God." [Note: Delitzsch, 2:25.]

When will all this happen? It will happen in "just a little while" ( Isaiah 29:17), "on that day" ( Isaiah 29:18), a day yet future but not specifically identified in the context. Since it has not happened yet, and since similar changes accompany Jesus Christ's millennial reign, that seems to be the day in view. "The Redeemer will surely bring to pass his perfect plan for Israel, and forge them into a godly and reverent people, after they have repented and opened their hearts to the truth of Christ." [Note: Archer, p630.]

In the next three "woes" (chs30-33) Isaiah became more specific. In the first three (chs28-29) he stressed principles of God's dealings with His people, but in these last three (chs30-33) he applied the principles to the historical situation they faced. However, there is a blending of historical and eschatological emphases in these "woes."

*(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/isaiah-29.html>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

Today's passage offers hope for all who find themselves far from God despite any robust religious heritage. In every generation churches are filled with those who have devoted themselves fully to God. But there are also those who attend out of habit or a sense of duty. Outside observers might consider this group to be highly religious. However, their true spiritual state is not hidden from God. He feels the coldness of their worship. He sees the plans they make without consulting him in prayer or study of Scripture. The unjust ways with which these congregants treat their neighbor are not hidden from God. The way back now is the same as it was in Isaiah's day: regardless of our current level of spiritual fervency, we need to live mindful of the reality that God judges each person justly. We have to discard the illusions that our thoughts are private before God. He sees our true spiritual condition, even when we don't allow ourselves that same insight. God the Father, through the completed work of Christ and the present indwelling of His Holy Spirit, is able and willing to free us so we can love Him with the entirety of our hearts, souls, and abilities (compare Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37). There is no question regarding His ability and our inability in that regard. Neither is there any question about His willingness to do so. The only question on the table is our willingness to allow Him to renew us.

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary***

Lip Service, But No Heart - God's people in Jerusalem talked religious, but their rituals had become a mere formality. The Lord used the prophet Isaiah to warn the people that their lips were saying one thing but their hearts were in a totally different place. Their leaders had allowed themselves to be lured into spiritual complacency, pride, immorality, and other worldly activities. They became blind to God's instructions and desires. Still, from this darkened place, God spoke hope and made promises for a bright future! Isaiah said it was like the potter and the clay God's people had decided the clay and the potter were equal. But God, the potter and creator, told the clay, His people, that they were misinformed. The clay cannot tell the potter what to do.

Hope in Darkness - But in the middle of this doom and gloom message, God sowed the seeds of hope. God promised restoration to Jerusalem for a remnant of His people who followed Him. The damaged land, incorrect thinking, and injustices would be turned into fruitful harvests, healed hearts, and opened eyes and ears. There would be laughter, dancing, and smiles again, though the wicked would bow low and endure endless suffering.

God's Promises - The real source of our blessing and help is the Lord—He always supplies. We bow down in humility as we acknowledge this truth, call Him holy, and abandon all other gods. Isaiah prophesied during a critical time in Judah's history, when there was very little to look forward to. Yet, through His prophet Isaiah, God proclaimed hope. His hope and His promises are for His children today as well.