

**ISAIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 29 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we will see, God is going to pour out His judgment upon Jerusalem because of their idolatry, because they turned away from the Lord. They did not learn from the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the judgment that came upon them. They did not learn the lesson, they forgot about what happened to them because of their idolatry. But even with all that they did in turning from God we will see the grace and mercy of God as they turn back to Him and He will restore the Jewish people. God is in the business of restoration and I am thankful for that. So that is where we are going to pick up our study this evening, in Isaiah chapter 29 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**ISAIAH 29****VERSES 1-4**

1. The reason we can say with certainty that this is speaking of Jerusalem is because it says it is **“... the city where David dwelt!”** Also, in Isaiah 29:8 we see that **“... Mount Zion”** is spoken of. Then why is Ariel used to speak of Jerusalem? The name **“Ariel”** means “Lion of God” and the idea is that this city is strong; it is powerful because God dwells there. But this word can also mean **“altar hearth”** and you can see that in Ezekiel 43:15-16.

What is the point? Keep in mind that we see here in verse 1 **“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel . . .”** This word is repeated twice and maybe the thought is this. This city of God that was once like a lion of God, but now, because of God’s judgment, they will be like an altar hearth where the people are the sacrificial victims. And as you read thought this that is what you do see!

2. Why did this happen to them? Judgment was coming upon them for their idolatry. Jeremiah said of this time, **“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water.”** Jeremiah 2:13. Because they have turned from the living God and have sought after the empty things of this world, they will be crushed!

And it was not like God did not warn them, He did. They just refused to hear God’s warning and turn from their wicked ways. They believed that life was just going to continue on and because they closed their eyes to what was going to happen they were totally unaware of the judgment that was coming.

That same mentality we see today and it will continue on, for Jesus said regarding the Tribulation Period or God’s judgment upon a Christ rejecting world, **“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”** Matthew 24:37-39.

People are no different today. In fact, today, like back then, many are warning of God's coming judgment but people want their ears tickled by the smooth talk of the false prophets, the false teachers, the wolves in sheep's clothing and they don't realize how close the judgment of God is!

#### VERSES 5-8

1. God is saying that He will destroy those nations that come against His people. Now that may be confusing. One minute God is saying that He is going to bring these nations down to judge Jerusalem and now He is saying that He is going to judge them because they came down upon Jerusalem, God's people and His city! What is going on here?

Yes God used pagan nations to judge His people and the problem was that they exceeded the bounds of His judgment and because of that God was going to judge them. Yes God will humble Jerusalem in the dust, and then scatter her enemies like fine dust, like chaff that passes away.

2. Now here's the thing. We hear today that God is done with the Jews and because of that wrong theology; many don't care what happens to the Jewish people. As you read these verses here in Isaiah you can clearly see God is saying that you are dreaming if you think you are going to take away God's people from God's city, Jerusalem. You see, the land doesn't belong to the Jews or the Palestinian's or anyone else. It belongs to God who has given it to the Jews.

So no nation in the past, in the present or even in the future will be able to destroy the Jews, wipe them out, not even during the Tribulation Period as the Antichrist and the world comes against the Jewish people. God's people will stand and they will be gathered back to Jerusalem after the Tribulation Period as their Lord, Jesus Christ sits upon the throne of David to rule and reign for 1,000 years!

#### VERSES 9-10

1. Remember back in Isaiah 29:1 we saw Jerusalem's pride as they just lived as they wanted, life just went on and the result of that, as we see here, was that it has made them spiritually blind and spiritually drunk. The Lord tells Jerusalem to pause and wonder at this because, although they do this to themselves, they lacked the self-awareness to see their condition; their condition blinded them to their sin as they staggered through life. What do I mean by "condition"? They were drunk!

And please understand that they are not staggering because they are drunk with wine but they are staggering because of the sinful condition they are in. Their sin has clouded their judgment; they are blind to what God is showing them. If your mind is confused, if you can't think straight, then your walk is going to be altered, it will be aimless, it will be like a man who is staggering because he is drunk.

2. We did talk about this last time but here again we see this drunkenness but not with wine and it seems to fit in well with those who say that being drunk in the Spirit is of God. Here we see it is a judgment from God upon a people who have moved away from His truth, from His Word! The people are in a stupor, they are sleeping and they don't even see the perversion that is going on right before them as these false prophets and false teachers are leading them down these paths!

3. And please understand that God did not cause this condition in their lives, they chose to go down these paths and thus, God made firm that which they desired - spiritual darkness! The prophets couldn't see the truths of God. The seers couldn't receive visions from God. And yet they were leading the people with false prophecies and false visions, and thus, they all were heading towards judgment as they staggered through life.

Amos spoke of this same idea and I think it is something we are seeing in our nation today. He wrote, “**Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord God, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, But shall not find it.’” Amos 8:11-12.**

4. Now as much as this deep sleep has come upon this people and upon our nation, God can awaken a people and a nation as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5:8-21, **“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”**

In other words, come back to the Lord and He will awaken you out of your spiritual sleep and the result of that awaking is that what God is doing on the inside of you will be manifested outwardly. You keep submitting to the Holy Spirit’s direction and you will walk in the light as He is in the light! You follow His Word and you will not get lost!

VERSES 11-12

1. Do you understand what the Lord is saying here? He is saying that man has all kinds of excuses why they don't understand His Word, why they don't read His Word, why they don't believe and apply His Word to their lives and none of them hold any water you might say. These excuses are empty!

Isaiah is telling us that both the literate and the illiterate can't understand the things of God because they refuse to hear what God has to say. They could justify their sin, water down God's Word so much, to such a point that it became meaningless. And we truly see that today, where we have people justifying all kinds of sin, negating what God has said or trying to re-interpret what God has said.

2. Let me show you what I mean. The late Peter Gomes was a gay minister at Harvard University. Listen to what he has to say about the Bible and homosexuality. We are told,

The Rev. Peter J. Gomes, a Harvard minister, theologian and author who announced that he was gay a generation ago and became one of America's most prominent spiritual voices against intolerance . . . One can read into the Bible almost any interpretation of morality, Mr. Gomes liked to say after coming out, for its passages had been used to defend slavery and the liberation of slaves, to support racism, anti-Semitism and patriotism, to enshrine a dominance of men over women, and to condemn homosexuality as immoral. . . .

Then, in 1991, he appeared before an angry crowd of students, faculty members and administrators protesting homophobic articles in a conservative campus magazine whose distribution had led to a spate of harassment and slurs against gay men and lesbians on campus. Mr. Gomes, putting his reputation and career on the line, announced that he was “a Christian who happens as well to be gay.”

“Religious fundamentalism is dangerous because it cannot accept ambiguity and diversity and is therefore inherently intolerant,” he declared in an Op-Ed article in the New York Times in 1992. “Such intolerance, in the name of virtue, is ruthless and uses political power to destroy what it cannot convert.”

In his 1996 best seller, “The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart,” Mr. Gomes urged believers to grasp the spirit, not the letter, of scriptural passages that he said had been misused to defend racism, anti-Semitism and sexism, and to attack homosexuality and abortion. *He offered interpretations that he said transcended the narrow context of modern prejudices.*

“The Bible alone is the most dangerous thing I can think of,” he told The Los Angeles Times. “You need an ongoing context and a community of interpretation to keep the Bible current and to keep yourself honest. Forget the thought that the Bible is an absolute pronouncement.” . . .

- [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/us/02gomes.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/us/02gomes.html?_r=0)



That is totally wrong and it contradicts what the Scriptures have to say. In fact, the most dangerous thing for us is to take away God's Word from our lives and that is exactly what Satan is doing and people are falling prey to it. And what he said is what the Emerging Church is promoting today, "The Bible alone is the most dangerous thing I can think of. You need an ongoing context and a community of interpretation to keep the Bible current and to keep yourself honest. Forget the thought that the Bible is an absolute pronouncement." No, the Bible is not dangerous but these false teachings are very dangerous because they are not leading people to the Lord but to Hell!

Listen to what Peter has to say in I Peter 1:22-25 in regards to the importance of God's Word to our lives. He wrote, "**Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.'** Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to **you.**"

Also, in II Peter 1:20-21 we read, "**knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**"

Yes Scripture is not for our own private interpretation; God says what He means and means what He says, but that is not what this verse is really saying. It is saying that Scripture did not come from man but it came from God, these are the Words of God! As you look at the context of that passage you clearly see that! And folk's, God doesn't need our help in telling people what He really meant! And if people refuse the truth of God's Word then they will remain in darkness! We may not agree with everything that God says but that is our problem. God has told us what is right and what is wrong and we need to believe Him!

#### VERSES 13-16

1. I think you can see that hypocrisy of their actions. They said that they loved the Lord, They were still going to the Temple, they were offering their sacrifices, they had all the motion but their hearts were far from God. And I do believe religious activity makes us feel good about ourselves, but God is looking for a relationship. Instead of fearing God according to His Word, they feared the Lord out of the traditions of man. And here's the thing and this is important for us to understand. God doesn't move away from His people; they remove their hearts from Him and that is exactly what we see here with the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

2. And the kicker is this. They did all these immoral things, they sinned and they thought they could hide their sin from God. They felt God did not see their hearts and their religious activity must have been enough, they looked good outwardly but inwardly they were far from God. And when a person is far from God then eventually what is going on in his heart will be manifested in his actions and he will have all kinds of reasons why his sin is okay before God! **NOT!**

3. And what the Southern Kingdom of Judah is doing I see the Christian church doing today. Look at how messed up they were? They had come to the point where they were telling God what to do instead of allowing the master potter to mold and shape them. We do the very same thing today. We have teachers telling us to turn our prayer and faith into some kind of force and demand God to give you what you want.

Do you think I'm kidding? Think again! Frederick Price said, "Now this is a shocker! But God has to be given permission to work in this earth realm on behalf of man. . . . Yes! You are in control! So, if man has control, who no longer has it? God. . . . When God gave Adam dominion, that meant God no longer had dominion. So, God cannot do anything in this earth unless we let Him. And the way we let Him or give Him permission is through prayer."

I am sorry, but that is a perverted way to think. God does not have to submit to us, it is the other way around. Notice again what verse 16 says, "**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'?**" The Living Bible puts it like this and it does drive the point home, "**How stupid can they be! Isn't he, the Potter, greater than you, the jars he makes? Will you say to him, 'He didn't make us'? Does a machine call its inventor dumb?**"

And now in the Emergent Church we have leaders who are telling us what God meant instead of listening to what God has clearly said. They tell us words don't have meaning and thus, these are illustrations to show us something and they will write books, with words not pictures to show us words don't have meaning. God means what He says and says what He means and it is very clear!

Why people follows these false teachers, these wolves in sheep's clothing I will never understand. They follow a man instead of the living God and many of these leaders are not even saved, they do not believe in the blood atonement, they do not believe that Jesus is God and-so-on, they are spiritually dead. Remember what the Lord said back in Isaiah 8:19-20, "**And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**"

I believe this is speaking of not just the physical dead but the spiritual dead as well. If they do not teach according to the Word of God there is no light in them and thus, don't listen to them! If more people followed this teaching then the Emerging Church and these other abominations would disappear because no one would follow them!

#### VERSES 17-21

1. This is looking to a day of deliverance when God will reverse things. Because of that this is ultimately looking ahead to the Kingdom Age when God will restore this earth and the deaf will hear, the blind will see, not only spiritually speaking, but physically also.

But I do see this applied to our lives today. The key is that we must humble ourselves before the Lord, we must submit to Him and as we do we will see the things of God, we will hear the things of God. But in our pride, in our arrogance, we will remain blind, we will remain deaf!

You see, when God's people are restored, pride no longer prevents them from hearing God's word or seeing God's work. Just as much as these are miracles in the natural realm, they are miracles in the spiritual realm also. We need to humbly seek God for ears to hear and eyes to see.

2. Let me share this with you. Listen to what one pastor wrote regarding these verses. He said,

Pride is the enemy of joy. We can be proud and have fun, we can be proud and have success, we can be proud and experience excitement, and we can be proud and be happy because of happy circumstances. But we cannot be proud and have joy in the Lord, or to whatever degree we are proud, we are missing joy in the Lord. The proud can never have joy in the Lord if they are in humble or poor circumstances.

- David Guzik

#### VERSES 22-24

1. Notice that God calls His people "**Jacob**" or "heal-catcher" "conniver" "trickster" because that was what they were acting like. They were not called "Israel" because they refused to be governed by God.

Now here is the wonderful thing. God is going to restore them; they are going to return to Him. Ultimately we see this prior to the Kingdom Age, at the end of the Tribulation Period. They will turn to Jesus as their Messiah, they will want to be taught by Him and His Word, they will love His truth instead of the lies that they were taught and accepted! It is as verse 24 says, **"These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, And those who murmured will learn doctrine."**

2. Maybe some of you here this evening feel like a Jacob instead of like Israel or governed by God. Here is the wonderful thing; you don't have to remain in that condition. What you need to do is humble yourself before the Lord and seek His face and follow after Him instead of what the world or the false teachers are telling you! You don't need to be ashamed anymore, just come and hallow the Holy One of Israel, come before the King of kings and Lord of lords and receive his healing touch!

3. As we move on into Isaiah chapter 30 we will see who they were trusting in and I will give you a hint, it is not the Lord!

### **ISAIAH 30**

#### **VERSES 1-5**

1. Keep in mind that this prophecy was given during the time that the Assyrian army was not only attacking Israel but also Judah. They first took the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity and then they came down upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Things did not look good for the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Assyria was a powerhouse and they were sweeping across the land and no one was stopping them!

So the logical conclusion is to get help from other nations and that may be logical but it was not the right thing to do. Notice that they did not seek the Lord, they came up with plans but they were not of God. And now, instead of trusting in the Lord they turned to man. Specifically they turned to the Egyptians to help them defeat the Assyrians. And God rebukes them for their lack of faith, for their lack of trust.

Now some may see this as unfair, at least they did something. But let's think about that for a minute. Egypt is a type of the world and not only that but keep in mind that God had already liberated them from the bondage they were in down in Egypt and instead of going to the Lord who delivered them before, they go to their old slave-master to ensure their freedom! They were adding sin to their sin; they were not solving the problem but making it worse!

2. And as you look at verses 2 through 4 you see that the leaders or representatives of Judah traveled down to Zoan and Hanes to work out this deal with Egypt. And God rebukes them again in Isaiah 31:1 where we read **“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!”**

Now as these representatives came to Egypt the Egyptian saw that they really had nothing to give to them in this deal, it would be foolish for them to help. But if they could defeat Assyria then they would not have to worry about this nation coming against them, or so they thought. And in the end Egypt was not able to help the Southern Kingdom of Judah out because the Assyrians attacked them before they could assist Judah! Like God said, it was foolish to trust in them instead of the living God, seeking counsel and direction from Him! They saw their plan with Egypt quickly fall apart and they were ashamed of their actions.

3. Now we have seen in our study of the Old Testament that it is really easy to come against the Jews for their lack of faith, that they did not look to the Lord for help, they did not trust in the Lord when things looked hopeless. And as we have seen here, many times they looked to their own ideas, their own ways and sought help from the world instead of the Lord.

We do the very same thing in our own lives! And make no mistake about it, we come up with reasons, we come up with explanations why we are doing what we are doing to justify our worldly ways instead of trusting in the Lord, taking counsel from Him. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are told, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”**

Why do we go back to the world for our help when the Lord who delivered us from the bondage of this world wants to help us, He wants to direct us. We need to go to the Lord and trust in Him even though it may be tough, even though we might not understand fully why we have to do what we are doing. You see, the world will not have the answers we *NEED*, they may have the answers that we *WANT* but not what we *NEED*, but the Lord who created us will! It is as Psalm 111:7-8 says, **“The works of His hands are verity [truth] and justice; All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, And are done in truth and uprightness.”** May we learn to trust in Him with our lives!



VERSES 6-7

1. The picture that God is painting for us here is that of these ambassadors from Judah traveling down to Egypt with these treasures to buy Egyptian help to fight against these Assyrians. So as these beasts of burdens labored to bring these treasures down, help never came because Egypt was put down by the Assyrians before they could assist Judah. And that tells me that they could not have helped Judah if they could not even help themselves!

2. Now this name, Rahab-Hem-Shebeth means “Rahab sits still” and Rahab is sometimes used to speak of Egypt and that is the idea here. We see that in Psalm 87:4 where Rahab is speaking of Egypt. In other words, as much as Judah sought the help of the Egyptians, in their time of need Egypt will sit down and do nothing, they will sit idly by as the Assyrians come upon Judah!

VERSES 8-11

1. God wanted Isaiah to write these words down so the people could see the warning of God to not trust in Egypt before it happened so that this would be a witness to them of their foolishness. Now please understand that God is not saying, “I told you so!” I don’t think that is how our God responds to what we do. I think these are lessons for us to learn from. That is what He is showing Judah and us. It is like Paul said in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”** It is then up to us to obey those lessons God is showing us or not, just like it was with Judah! You see, God tells Judah this before it happens and He wants it documented. Why? The reason is simple. When it all unfolds exactly as the Lord had spoken Judah can have greater trust in the Lord.

2. As Isaiah spoke of God's coming judgment for their idolatry notice how the people responded. They didn't want to hear those words. This was a negative message and they wanted a more positive message. The truth of the matter is this, "The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it."

When the doctors told us that there was nothing more they could do for my dad, his cancer was going to kill him, my family wanted to keep that from him because they were afraid to tell him. I understand that but by not telling him it did change the fact of the matter. He needed to know the truth and thus, I told him because no one else wanted to. The truth may be hard to take but a lie is just that, a lie!

And let's think about this for a minute with Judah. Instead of the truth they wanted the prophets to lie to them, make them feel better about the situation they were in, make them feel better about themselves. They were not interested in a relationship with God but of just being a religious people that felt good about themselves while they lived in sin. Sounds like what many churches are teaching today and what many people want to hear! That condition is terminal and they can feel good about it but there is only death and destruction that will come out of it!

That is exactly what Paul warned us of what the last days would be like. And please understand that Paul is not speaking to atheists here in II Timothy 4:3-4, but religious people, those who saw themselves as Christians but they were not. They were in the church but their profession of faith was only superficial. And this is what Paul said, "**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**"

What we see today is what Isaiah was dealing with back then. Look at verses 10 and 11 of Isaiah chapter 30 once again as the people of Judah, **“Who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ And to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us.’”** Like back then we see so-called Christians not wanting to hear the Word of God any longer. They want roads that are broad for all to travel on. They don’t want the God of the Bible in their lives but a god that has come from the imagination of their own hearts and that is wicked! We have not learned the lesson!

3. Now we don’t have to guess how God feels about their actions, about their behavior, we just need to read on and it is very clear!

#### VERSES 12-14

1. Because they rejected the truth of God’s Word what they will trust in will be a lie. And the illustration is that of a wall that is bulging, ready to burst forth and break. They put their trust in Egypt and they found out that Egypt came crashing down, they were no help to Judah at all! Egypt was not a wall of defense for Judah and as this wall of defense began to bulge it finally gave way and came crashing to the ground!

2. Let’s apply this to our own lives once again. Do we despise the Word of God? Now most if not all of us would say that we would never do that but if we are trusting what the world is saying, if we are listening to them and following their advice, their directions, then we are despising the Word of God and we are following lies and perversions!

VERSES 15-17

1. Notice what God is telling them here. He is telling them to repent, to return to Him because that is where we will find rest, that is where we are saved! And this is truly just showing that when you trust God and His promises then you are not trusting in yourself. And think about this for a minute. When we trust God we can rest because we are not striving to do it ourselves. We can rest in Him!

When we trust in God and His promises we can have that quietness. What do I mean by that? I mean we are not arguing with God to get our own way, we are resting in Him, trusting in Him. We can be quiet not only before the Lord but also before others because we are trusting in Him!

And when we trust in God and His promises we can have that confidence that what God has spoken He is more than able to bring to pass! And when you put this all together you have a man or women of God who is unstoppable, not because of their strength, but they trusted in the Lord and they are walking by faith!

2. Now let's apply this to our own lives. Where are you at this evening? Are you satisfied in your career for instance or is your career about your own self-validation, what you have done? If that is the way you are looking at it then you are not going to be satisfied, there will always be more achievements that you will have to make to validate your life. On the other hand, can you just rest in the Lord and the plan that He has for your life, satisfied to be just a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord you might say or is that too little for you? If it is then you will never be satisfied!

3. God has promised them these things and their response is that they refused what God had for them and in the end, they lost! And notice the arrogance of their speech. Instead of resting in the Lord they were ready to jump on the Egyptian war horses and instead of defeating the enemy they will be fleeing for their lives!

And it is so bad that God is saying that He is going to strip them bare in this judgment. Instead of their enemies fleeing from them, they will cause Judah to flee and be scattered. The reason is given to us in Deuteronomy chapter 28 where we see the promise of blessings for obedience unto God and also the promise of cursing for their disobedience unto God. They refused to hear the prophets of God, they wanted a positive message which were nothing more than lies from these false prophets, and judgment came.

#### VERSE 18

1. What I want you to see here is God's love for His people. He is going to wait; He is going to look at His people, desiring to be gracious to them. But first they needed to reach a place of brokenness, no longer independent or self-dependent, but God-dependent! God had to wait till they came to the end of themselves and when they did and turned towards Him; He extended His arm of grace and mercy to them. In your relationship with the Lord, think of it this way; either God is waiting upon you or you are waiting upon Him. You decided which the better place to be is!

Spurgeon summed it up like this for us. He wrote, “Certain of God’s people are in trouble and distress, and they are eager for immediate rescue. They cannot wait God’s time, nor exercise submission to his will. He will surely deliver them in due season; but they cannot tarry till the hour cometh; like children, they snatch at unripe fruit. ‘To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven’; but their one season is the present; they cannot, they will not wait. They must have their desire instantaneously fulfilled, or else they are ready to take wrong means of attaining it. If in poverty, they are in haste to be rich; and they shall not long be innocent. If under reproach, their heart ferments towards revenge. They would sooner rush under the guidance of Satan into some questionable policy, than in childlike simplicity trust in the Lord and do good. It must not be so with you, my brethren, you must learn a better way.”

#### VERSE 19

1. When they realize the folly of their ways and cry out to God in repentance God will hear and heal them. You see, out of the adversity God brought blessings!

#### VERSES 20-21

1. When Judah was prosperous and comfortable they wouldn’t listen to God. Now, God has given them the bread of adversity and water of affliction, but they can hear God and be guided by Him again. We are not different, when things are going well we tend not to listen to God. But when the heat is turned up God gets our attention and we listen to Him once again. That should not be the case, we should listen to God at all times but that is the case many times!

And we see here that God's people will learn their lesson. As these times of adversity come upon them they will listen to the true prophets of God, even though what they have to say may be difficult. No longer will they seek teachers who will tickle their ears with smooth talk, but they will reject these false prophets.

Did they learn this lesson when they went into captivity in Babylon? You bet they did. God's people never again worshipped in the groves, they never worshipped the god's of Baal or Molech. You see, God allows adversity in our lives so we may look to Him, be guided by Him. If we refuse there will always be someone or something else to guide you, but in the wrong direction many times! You will know the true prophets by their fruit, by the words they speak, if they match up with God's Word or not. If they don't then they are false prophets, plain and simple! And here's the thing, it's always better to be uncomfortable and in tune with the Lord than to be comfortable and out of step with God!

### VERSE 22

1. This is what God wanted them to do, to get rid of these idols and return to Him. Now the New King James tried to make this more palatable as they used the words "**unclean thing.**" But the literal Hebrew is literally a menstrual cloth. In other words, the people of God would come to hate their idols so much that they would throw them away as readily as they would throw away a used menstrual cloth. And like I have said, they did do this when they returned from Babylon but this will ultimately be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age when the nation of Israel returns to their Messiah, Jesus Christ!

VERSES 23-26

1. This is obviously looking towards the future, the Kingdom Age. And notice that the days will no longer be dark and gloomy but bright and glorious! And the reason it will be so bright is because the glory of the Lord will shine forth upon this land!

VERSES 27-29

1. Isaiah sees the Judgment of God quickly coming, probably looking at the Assyrians who were a very cruel and brutal people. And God is upset with them and is going to judge them for their actions. Ultimately it is looking ahead to the Tribulation Period and God will judge a Christ rejecting world and put down those who have come against His people, the Jews and He will do it swiftly. God's people don't have to fear, in fact, instead of fear there will be a song; they will have glad hearts as they come to worship the Lord on Mount Zion!

VERSES 30-33

1. As I have said, there is a near fulfillment and that is obvious. God is going to bring His judgment upon the Assyrians. The Assyrians encamped around Jerusalem and as Hezekiah prayed to the Lord for deliverance, that night the angel of the Lord came and destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. And when the Jews woke up they saw their enemy dead and a song broke out in the land. It was a time to rejoice in the Lord at what He has done! This has happened.



2. But there is also a future fulfillment seen. As you read this it seems to also be speaking of the Tribulation Period or God's wrath being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world. Just listen again to what is spoken of here, **“The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard . . . With indignation of His anger And the flame of a devouring fire, With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.”**

And when Isaiah speaks of Tophet he is speaking of the Valley of Tophet. This was an Old Testament name for the Valley of Hinnom and it was the place where the children of Israel sacrificed their children to the god Molech, passing them through the fire, burning them to death. This valley later became the place where the garbage of the city was burned, with a continual smoldering seen in this valley.

In the New Testament Jesus used the Valley of Hinnom as an object lesson, likening it to the place of everlasting punishment or Gehenna. It was a place that Jesus described as a place **“where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.’”** Mark 9:44. Not a pretty picture of the final resting place, and I use that term loosely, of the wicked. These maggots will feed upon your eternal body and the fire has continual fuel to burn and I think you get the idea of eternal punishment, it is not a good thing and yet many people joke about it and think it is going to be fun, party time. Not at all!

And please understand that Gehenna is identical to the **“lake of fire”** that is spoken of in Revelation 20:14. It is the **“outer darkness”** or the eternal state of the wicked that are eternally separated from God. It is also in reference to the **“second death”** found in Revelation 20:6, which is seen in the Great White Throne Judgment and thus the sentencing of the wicked to the Lake of Fire.

I realize that there is some confusion but the Lake of Fire or Gehenna is not the same as Hades in the Greek or Sheol in the Hebrew. Hades or Sheol is the holding tank for the wicked until the Great White Throne Judgment when their sentences will be handed out and they will be cast into outer darkness.

Now that is for the wicked, but what about the righteous in Christ? Revelation 20:6 says, **“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”** The second death is not for us, only for the wicked. Because we are a child of God we will enter eternity with Him! Think of it like this. Born once and you will die twice. Born twice and you will only die once. What do I mean by that? If you are born again you are born twice and this second death will have no power over you!

And as Isaiah said, **“You shall have a song As in the night when a holy festival is kept, And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, To come into the mountain of the Lord, To the Mighty One of Israel.”** Isaiah 30:29.