

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

**The
Book Of
Woes
Part Two**

Isaiah 29

Lesson Thirty-One

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

The Book Of Woes, Part Two

In chapter twenty-nine, we read “Woe to you, Ariel...” Ariel means the “alter of God.” It refers, of course, to Jerusalem. Read Isaiah 29:1-8.

The Temple of Solomon was in Jerusalem and for the people of Israel, God was in the Temple. It may be that Isaiah, quoting God, was reminding the people of God’s presence when he used that unusual name, Ariel.

The first verses speak of God’s promise to punish the people of Judah, repeating what we read in the last verses of chapter twenty-eight. Judah would be like someone thrown down into the dirt. They would be mumbling with a face full of dust, sounding like a ghost whispering.

Then, in verse five, Isaiah does another one of his quick changes and God is speaking, not as the one punishing Judah, but as the one defending Judah. It is likely that this speaks of the time when Sennacherib attacked Judah in 701 BC. God tells His people that their enemies will be destroyed. They will retreat having no victory. They will be like a hungry person who dreams that they are eating a feast, but wakes up hungry.

In the next paragraph, we find two very scary truths. Read Isaiah 29:9-14. This is to the people as they were before Sennacherib’s invasion. Verse nine in the New International Version can be misunderstood. Literally it means to be delayed, or even be drugged (out of your mind). It means wait. Or feel nothing (be numb). The people are so overcome by their own sin that they are too stunned to hear and to act on God’s message. The Word of God, spoken by Isaiah, is too much of a religion to the people (just doing things by habit) and they can’t act on it.

So the first scary thing God told the people is that they, according to verses 10-12, are so busy with material things that they are blind to God’s Word and will. They were so busy making money, buying land, planting crops, tending their herds, that they didn’t take time to worship God, nor did they see that as very important. It is like they have the book, but they can’t read it. They hear the prophet, but they don’t really hear him. It’s like they have the instructions, but they won’t open the instruction book.

The second scary thing is brought out in verses 13, 14. The people have a religion that is just stuff memorized. They worship God according to a set of instructions, not from the heart. We are reminded of the oracle in chapter six (verses 9, 10) when God said, “be ever hearing but never understanding; be ever seeing but never perceiving...make their ears dull and close their eyes.” Here a scroll is sealed, and no one is willing to open it. God said that the people acted like they were faithful and true to God, but what they said and what they did proved that “their”

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hearts are far from me.”

In verses 15, 16 we find Isaiah again condemning those who were trying to get Judah into an agreement with Egypt for military protection. They thought that their negotiations were in secret...like God could not see what they were not doing. Their actions were turning the situation upside down. They were disrespecting God, much like a clay pot on the potter's wheel that came to life and tried to put the potter on the wheel instead. It was like the clay thought it could do a better job than the potter. **God is the potter, humans are the clay.**

In the final verses of this chapter we find another leap. Isaiah moves to the last days. These are the days after Jesus returns to earth. This is God's promise to His people. He begins with a question: “Is it not just a little while...?” Or, “In a very short time...?” Read Isaiah 29:17-24. God is saying that it will seem like no time at all before things will be entirely different. That beautiful forest of Lebanon will be restored. There follows a contrast. In that day, the blind will see and the deaf will hear. Those who are in need will be happy. On the other hand, the ruthless, the scorner (those who ridicule), those who make the courts dishonest, those who cheat the poor and those who fool people with words will all be gone.

The final message in this chapter is that just as God redeemed Abraham's family, He will redeem Judah. God lives up to His promises. A new day dawns. The people will acknowledge God. They will respect Him. They will lead holy lives. If they have strayed away from God, they will now know God's way. If they complained about the situation, they will now ask for and follow God's instruction.

Earlier we said that there were two scary truths in verses 9-14. These are most frightening because what was true then is true today. A nation that is focused on material things gets less and less focused on God. Can we say that about nations in our day? Second, when people “worship” according to a list of instructions (instead of from the heart), like saying the right thing in church, or doing the right thing in church, they are dishonoring God. We have all these man-made activities that are supposed to be about worshiping God, when all they are is following man-made instructions. Isaiah, quoting God, is saying that the worship of God is a heart thing, not a head thing.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

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Scripture Memory: “The Lord says, ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Isaiah 29:13

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to see the fallacy of heartless worship.

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Student Worksheet

The Book of Woes Part Two—Isaiah 29

As the teacher goes through the lesson, listen for answers to these:

1. God tells His people that their enemies will be _____. They will _____ having no victory. They will be like a _____ person who dreams that they are eating a _____, but wake up _____.
2. What two “scary things” do we find in Isaiah 29:9-14?
3. When the “new day dawns,” what will be the differences?
4. Isaiah, quoting God, is saying that the _____ of God is a _____ thing, not a _____ thing

Scripture Memory: “The Lord says, ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Isaiah 29:13

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.