

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THEME:

Prophecies concerning Jerusalem beginning in the immediate future and reaching on into the Kingdom.

REMARKS:

The prophecies in this chapter are confined to Jerusalem, but extend from the invasion of Sennacherib, through the time when Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles: until the last invader (Zechariah 14:1-7) shall have destroyed Jerusalem and, finally, to the establishment of the kingdom when the Messiah shall come and His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives.

It is necessary to establish the fact that Jerusalem is the city designated under the title of Ariel. Isaiah delights in a play upon words as we have observed in this book. Ariel means "lion like." The word occurs in II Samuel 23:20.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow.

A "lion like" man is an "*ariel*" man. The word means "*the lion of God.*" In Ezekiel 43:16 the word is translated "**altar.**" The word could mean "*altar of God.*" Both designations are a fitting title for the city of Jerusalem. It is further identified as "**the city where David dwelt.**" The lion is the insignia of this family. Our Lord is called the "**lion of the tribe of Judah.**" Likewise Jerusalem was the place where the temple of God was and the altar, of course, was there. It will prove profitable to compare this chapter with our Lord's discourse on Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37-24:2 with Luke 13:34-35 and Luke 21:20-24.

OUTLINE:

1. **JERUSALEM—History and Prophecy.** Verses 1-8 "**Trodden down of the Gentiles**"
2. **JERUSALEM—Meaning and Message** Verses 9-16 "**As a hen gathereth her chickens under the wings and ye would not.**" "**Your house is left unto you desolate.**"
3. **JERUSALEM—Honor and Glory.** Verses 17-24 "**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**"

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.**

This second woe is pronounced upon Jerusalem. It corresponds to a great sigh of concern which comes from a heart welling up with emotion. It reminds us of our Lord's lament over Jerusalem, "**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate**" (Matthew 23:37, 38).

These words come from a Man who was weeping and He longed to extend mercy, he was reluctant to display His judgment.

Verse 2—**Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.**

This is judgment upon Jerusalem.

Verse 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.**

Verse 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.**

Verse 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.**

Jerusalem has been besieged and captured by the enemy more often than any other city. The Gentiles have marched through her streets and still do to this very moment. The passage here could not refer specifically to the siege of Sennacherib, recorded further on in this book (chapters 36-37), for there the angel of the Lord lifted the siege by destroying the Assyrian hordes. It begins with "**the times of the Gentiles**" in 606 B.C, and continues through the entire time when "**Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.**" It will culminate in the final siege which is the worst one of all (Zechariah 14).

Verse 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.**

Verse 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.**

Verse 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.**

This final attack upon Jerusalem is a judgment of God, but He will intervene at the last to deliver His people from extermination. These dreams of the enemies of God to bring in their own kingdom will be frustrated, and after God has put them down, all their planning will appear as dream stuff.

Today men's attempts to build a kingdom are merely visionary.

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

Verse 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.**

Even the prophets and princes did not anticipate this deliverance from God. They were as blinded to the future as the enemies of God. They were as men who were dead drunk.

Verse 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:**

Verse 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.**

The attitude of the people, including God's people, before their final deliverance by God, was that prophecy was too obscure to be understood, that it was a sealed subject about which they could know nothing.

Is not this the present day attitude of many church leaders and preachers?

They take the position, for instance, that the book of the Revelation is a sealed book and cannot be understood. This is repeated monotonously and brazenly by many denominational leaders in spite of the fact that there are clear statements of blessings for those who will read and hear.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Revelation 1:3).

And he saith unto me. Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand (Revelation 22:10).

Revelation is definitely not a sealed book in spite of the false humility of apostate teachers.

Verse 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:

Verse 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.

People are judged for taking the attitude toward God that we cannot know God's sure word of prophecy.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation (II Peter 3:3-4).

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape (I Thessalonians 5:1-3).

It is an hypocritical attitude. It professes to know God while at the same time pleading ignorance. The prophet likens it to a mouth religion but not a heartfelt religion.

Verse 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?

This chapter contains two woes because:

- (1) they act as if God does not see or know,
- (2) they act as if they are getting by with it.

Verse 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?

The confusion produced by this topsy-turvy turning of things causes God to do the same thing socially, economically, and politically.

This spurious spirituality denies that God created man and indulges in the blasphemy of questioning God's wisdom and actions.

Verse 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?

Verse 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.

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

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

Verse 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.

We leave the evening of man's day and now we enter the morning of God's day. This is a picture of the Kingdom which is coming. Fruitfulness returns to the earth, and the spiritual blindness, dense as an ugly fog bank, is lifted.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 24—They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

These final words look into the future for their total fulfillment. There has been nothing in the past that compares to this.

~ end of chapter 29 ~

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