

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #40

Isaiah 29:15-24

When I got home from church on Sunday night, I received a call from someone who now lives in Chicago. Her church is starting to drift from carefully teaching the Scriptures. It is moving to the shallow and to entertainment. Prayer meetings have been replaced by programs and the church is beginning to drift from its true Biblical moorings. Whenever I hear something like that, it makes me sad. Churches all over the world are drifting away from a reverent worship of God and of a desire to actually know God's written Word. But I can tell you this, one day this will all change. One day the only kind of worship will be reverent worship and all people will want to know the truth and be carefully instructed in the truth. When you look at **verse 13** it is clear that God wants to be revered. He does not want things light and fluffy. He wants people standing in "awe" (**v. 23**) of Him and His Word and He wants people who are after serious systematic "instruction" (**v. 24**).

What we are seeing in most churches today is exactly what Isaiah saw in Jerusalem in his day. He saw a bunch of people going to the temple to supposedly worship God, but it was not reverent worship based on His Word. In fact, people were worshipping God with their lips but not their hearts (29:13). The religious scene was in shambles. Worship was shallow and the theological world was caving in. To make matters worse, the religious leaders were inventing their own theology, certainly not based on a careful understanding of God's written Word. So God used Isaiah to say, "I'll put an end to all of this one day." I'll put an end to the shallow doctrine and one day the entire world will stand in awe of Me, and when that happens, that small remnant of people who loved My Son and My Word will rejoice.

That is exactly what Isaiah says right here. His point is this:

GOD'S TRUE REMNANT CAN REJOICE KNOWING THAT GOD WILL EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE ALL GOD-MOCKING RUTHLESS PEOPLE, AND ALL PEOPLE LEFT ON THE EARTH WILL REVERENCE GOD, HIS SON AND HIS WORD.

There will come a day when all people will want careful instruction from the Word of God. There will come a day when all people will really want to know God's truth. There will come a day when all people will stand in awe of God and of Jesus Christ. Isaiah sees that day right here and he saw **seven amazing wonderful blessings**:

WONDERFUL BLESSING #1 – God will totally destroy all those who did not reverence Him. **29:15-16**

Now this is a "woe" judgment and it is specifically aimed at those who actually invent their own views and doctrines of God. **Any person who has this view of God described in these verses is heading to eternal disaster. God is going to specifically target these people with His wrath with a special "woe" judgment.**

Now some commentators do not include this in the list of blessings but begin their list of blessings in **verse 17**. However, these verses grammatically sit in the context of the preceding and following verses and, in my opinion, demand this type of exegetical approach. There will be no greater blessing on this earth than when God destroys all false, arrogant, religious and political leaders who mocked Him and His Word. **The contextual point is that God wants to be feared and revered for who He actually is, not on the basis of their wisdom and their traditions (Isaiah 29:13-14).**

Now if you carefully look down through this text, you will discover that what these leaders and people did was to invent their own theology about God that was purely man-centered, not God-centered. If you look carefully, you will discover that the theology subtly makes man his own God. **It was a theology based on their own invented views and opinions rather than the written Word of God.**

Behind all of their faulty beliefs was failure to believe that God is a sovereign God. These people thought they were sovereign and refused to acknowledge the sovereign greatness and sovereign majesty of God. I want you to realize that **these are very religious people**. Isaiah is addressing the people of Israel. He is talking to Judah who lived in the most sacred city in the world, Jerusalem. But these people drifted from the Word of God. They drifted to their own reasonings and traditions and they formed an heretical theology. **In Jerusalem the religious leaders were actually teaching and propagating four heretical theological lies:**

Heretical Theological Lie #1 - We make our own plans without any consideration of God and His Word. **29:15a**

The point that Isaiah wants to make here is that these arrogant religious people and leaders actually believed they could outsmart God. They believed that they could hide things from God. They believed they could plan things and do secret things that no one would know or see. They mocked God by their doctrine. They didn't even think they needed God, and thought they could make their own plans and do various things in deep, dark places that were hidden from the sight of God. In all reality these leaders thought "they were their own god." They taught that they didn't need God's Word or God in any way to form any of their plans. They believed they could hide their counsel and plans from the LORD. This is about as stupid and as arrogant of a theology as you will ever see.

You make a fatal mistake when you think you can plan things without consulting God. You make a fatal mistake when you think no one sees what you do. Proverbs tells us that we should not ever lean on our own understanding, but trust in God and He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6). God's Word teaches that we need to ask Him for wisdom and the man who gets God's wisdom is blessed (Proverbs 3:13). To make any plan without consulting God is foolish and to actually teach others to do it will bring a "woe" judgment.

Heretical Theological Lie #2 - We believe that God does not see or know what we are doing. **29:15b**

Don't kid yourself; there are religious leaders who are very corrupt and behind their closed doors they live corrupt lives and they live with a philosophy that says "no one sees what we are doing and no one knows what we do?" This is a major attack against God's sovereignty. This form of arrogant humanism says we make our own decisions and we do our own work and we are not accountable to God, for God does not really see us or know us.

When you compare what these people believed to what the Bible actually says, their theology was insane. For example:

Proverbs 15:3 specifically states, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good."

Job 34:21 specifically says, "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps."

God is all knowing (Omniscience) and God is all seeing (Omnipresence) and it is pure arrogance to promote a theology that says you can somehow do things in secret that God does not know or see.

Hear Isaiah and hear him well; any religious person or organization that downplays God's sovereignty will one day be brought to their knees by the sovereign God they denied.

Heretical Theological Lie #3 - Man is equal to God. **29:16a**

Again, this was the twisted theology that was being taught in Jerusalem. It was an absurd perversion which said man is the potter and God is the clay. Man is equal to God.

To show you how absurd this is, it is impossible to even imagine lifeless clay usurping the living potter who must form the clay. The potter always has authority over the clay and never is the process reversed.

I am telling you that there is a theology that is taught in theological schools and in churches that downplays the sovereignty of the potter and completely elevates the sovereignty of the clay. It is a theological heresy that says man's will can somehow usurp or overtake God's will. It is called by many names, Pelagianism, Arminianism, and is even given the subtle title "free will of man." It is all points to the same heresy which says **man has a will just as sovereignly powerful and equal to God** and can actually decide things apart from God.

Remember this, the potter always has authority over the clay and never is the process reversed.

Heretical Theological Lie #4 - Man was not really made by God. **29:16b**

We live in a world that basically believes this lie because I guarantee you this, if people in this world didn't believe this, they would instantly stop aborting babies who have been fearfully and wonderfully made and ordained by God.

The denial here is that God created man. The theology was so man-centered that it reached an evil level that denied God is the Creator. This heresy re-exploded in Charles Darwin's day (1809-1882), but it was not new to his day, for it existed back in the days of Isaiah.

What I find so disturbing in our day is the willingness of some “Christians” to try to make evolution compatible with Biblical Christianity. There is no compatibility. **Evolution is a crazy, insane heretical theory invented by arrogant evil men who deny God.** Frankly, I am afraid that many Christians shy away from boldly declaring God is our Maker, God is our Creator. They couch it in a new language which they call “Intelligent Design.” All this is language designed to soften truth to try and avoid any conflict with evolutionists. God says about these kinds of people that they have “no understanding” (29:16). Those who propagate this will become the target of God’s wrath. This is the context of Isaiah. **Get this into your mind - you are going to stand before Almighty God who created this universe and everything in it, including you. Don’t deny that; defend that.**

Augustine said one time he asked the stars to tell him about their God, and he said they replied with a loud voice, “He himself made us.” This is the basic premise of faith - God is our creator. It is a terrible disaster when a nation is led by people who have forgotten the great spiritual heritage that we have.

In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin said this: “I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth - **that God governs in the affairs of men.** I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of heaven and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this Assembly every morning ...” (Cited from Warren Wiersbe, *Be Comforted*, p. 76).

Our country has done everything it can to remove God from government and society. One day God will remove those entire God-mocking politicians and religious leaders and theologians from the face of this earth and what a day of blessing that will be.

The first blessing is that God will remove all those who refused to reverence Him and His Word.

WONDERFUL BLESSING #2 – God will transform the Promised Land. 29:17

The amazing prediction that is made here is that there is coming a day when a mountainous, fruitless area like Lebanon will become a fertile paradise. Lebanon is a mountainous wild country, which is anything but a fertile field. But God promises that great transformation is coming to the Promised Land.

I challenge anyone to look through the next verses and show me in history where anything like this has ever happened. But I tell you with dogmatic certainty, the things predicted here will happen just exactly as God says it will in the future.

We now get to look into the future and see the wonderful honor and glory that will eventually be in Jerusalem and in the Promised Land. The phrase “a little while” refers to the Millennium that will follow the Tribulation.

Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field and will be considered to be like a forest. Land that was devastated will become a beautiful paradise.

WONDERFUL BLESSING #3 – God will heal all physical deformities. **29:18**

At the same period of time when God is transforming the Promised Land, He will also transform those with physical and spiritual deformities.

People who have been deaf will hear and people who have been blind will see. Disabled people will all be healed. The “book” that is being referred to is the Word of God.

This obviously also refers back to the judicial blindness which will be lifted (Isaiah 29:10-11).

WONDERFUL BLESSING #4 – God will reverse the status of the afflicted and needy.
29:19

The hurting and the poor will be enriched and will rejoice. They will see God do some wonderful special things for them.

Now another clue is given as to when this will all happen, when the “Holy One of Israel” is present. This, of course, is none other than Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ comes back a second time and puts His feet on this earth, then all of these blessings will be blessings Israel will enjoy.

WONDERFUL BLESSING #5 – God will put an end to all evil ruthless people. **29:20-21**

In order for God’s people to be truly glad and happy, all evil, ruthless tyrants and people must be gone. In Hebrew the nouns “ruthless” and “scorner” are anarthrous, which means neither has an article “the.” What this means is that Isaiah is not speaking about one specific tyrant or ruthless person, but of all who have made life miserable for God’s people and have mocked or scoffed at God and His Word.

Verse 21 makes it clear that one of the chief ways ruthless people attack God’s people is through their words. These are people who have used their words to indict innocent people and to deprive people of justice. These are people who have trapped others. These are people who have defrauded the one in the right.

These are people God promises to destroy. There will be no more injustices in any court. The scoffers and the God-mockers will be gone.

WONDERFUL BLESSING #6 – God will cause all of Israel to know Him and worship Him. **29:22-23**

The “therefore” which begins **verse 22** connects us back to the preceding thought, and that is God has removed all the ruthless evil people. The actual eschatology of all of this is at the end of the Great Tribulation.

Now the opening of **verse 22** makes it clear that we are talking about a time when God has redeemed Abraham. This has at least two implications. First, God has redeemed Abraham nationally; that is He has redeemed his physical lineage, Israel. Second, God has redeemed Abraham personally; that is He has raised him physically from the dead.

The attitude that will eventually exist in Israel about God will be dramatically changed.

(Change #1) - Israel will no longer be ashamed. **29:22a**

(Change #2) - Israel will no longer be afraid. **29:22b**

(Change #3) - Israel will see her children grow up with the blessings of God. **29:23a**

Now the offspring of Jacob literally refers to his lineage. God will literally raise up Jacob's children and when Jacob sees this, he will stand in awe of God.

Now this is important because this shows us that during the Millennium there will be children who will live and multiply and experience the blessings of God.

(Change #4) - Israel will sanctify God's name and God's Son. **29:23b**

God the Son must always be honored at the same level as God the Father.

(Change #5) - Israel will stand in awe of God. **29:23c**

Just imagine for a moment what Israel will eventually see. She will see God destroy all of her ruthless enemies and then raise her up as His nation and put her in His land and bless her. It is no wonder she will stand in awe of God.

By the way, the true God is "the God of Israel" which means Israel is His special nation. He is not said to be the God of Arabs or Americans or Asians or Africans or Australians; He is the God of Israel which means Israel is the "apple of His eye." Wise is the nation who acknowledges this for God always blesses those who bless her and curses those who do not.

WONDERFUL BLESSING #7 – God will cause all people to love His truth and instruction.
29:24

Edward Young said, "What is clearly taught in this passage is that knowledge of understanding is something that men must learn and this they learn from God their Teacher. Nor do men understand doctrine until they are taught it of God" (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 2, p. 333).

All people in the world will hunger after the truth of God. All will want to be taught. All will be after truth. All will accept instruction.

God is a sovereign God and He knows everything about you and He has seen everything you have ever done, even when you thought no one saw you. Every moment of folly and sin He has seen and He has provided a way whereby you may be cleansed of it all. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, and you shall be saved.