

Isaiah 29-30A

- At the end of chapter 28, Isaiah told two parables
 - These parables explained the consequences of Judah's error of entering into a covenant with Egypt to defend themselves against the advancing army of Assyria
 - Assyria has been in the land of Judah doing what they please for 14 years
 - The Assyrians were brought into the land by God to punish Judah after Ahaz their king wouldn't trust in God to protect them
 - In Isaiah's day, the people of Jerusalem were looking for a solution to expelling the invaders
 - But Isaiah tells them not to resist God's judgment
 - But as in Ahaz's day, the people rebel against the prophet and king Hezekiah enters into a covenant with Egypt
 - Isaiah says that God would respond by bringing the nation through a new round of judgment and discipline
 - But it would be with good purpose
 - There would be plowing and threshing - pictures of judgment
 - But it would give way to sowing for a new harvest
- Now Isaiah follows his parables to tell how God would accomplish the actual judgment through a series of woes (hence the name Book of Woes)
 - In chapter 29 we see the threshing and plowing for their mistake in siding with Egypt
 - Later chapters show the sowing as God uses this judgment for good
 - And along the way, we see Isaiah weave in discussions of another future time when Israel enters into a covenant with an enemy - Tribulation

Is. 29:1 Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped!

 Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.

Is. 29:2 I will bring distress to Ariel,

 And she will be a city of lamenting and mourning;

 And she will be like an Ariel to me.

Is. 29:3 I will camp against you encircling you,

 And I will set siegeworks against you,

 And I will raise up battle towers against you.

Is. 29:4 Then you will be brought low;

 From the earth you will speak,

 And from the dust where you are prostrate

 Your words will come.

 Your voice will also be like that of a spirit from the ground,

 And your speech will whisper from the dust.

- *Ariel* is a Hebrew word meaning two things

- It can mean the lion of God or it can mean the hearth of God and it is used in this passage both ways
 - In the first verse we know from the context that Isaiah is speaking of Jerusalem
 - The city where David camped or pitched his tent so to speak
 - Isaiah says this city is going to be a place of mourning as a result of their mistake in entering into the covenant with Egypt
 - God will bring a siegeworks against them
 - He's referring to the army of Assyria that comes against Jerusalem and sieges it in Hezekiah's day
 - The city will become an ariel to me
 - Meaning, it will become like the hearth of God, a place of burning fire
 - And as verse 4 indicates, it will bring misery upon them
 - The full details of this event await us in a few chapters later in the book of woes
 - But notice what comes next at this point

Is. 29:5 But the multitude of your enemies will become like fine dust,
 And the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away;
 And it will happen instantly, suddenly.

Is. 29:6 From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise,
 With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

Is. 29:7 And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel,
 Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her,
 Will be like a dream, a vision of the night.

Is. 29:8 It will be as when a hungry man dreams –
 And behold, he is eating;
 But when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied,
 Or as when a thirsty man dreams –
 And behold, he is drinking,
 But when he awakens, behold, he is faint
 And his thirst is not quenched.
 Thus the multitude of all the nations will be
 Who wage war against Mount Zion.

- Now the promise of something better
 - These enemies that camp against you will amount to nothing in the end
 - It an instant, they'll be gone like chaff
 - Speaking to these enemies, Isaiah says in verse 6 “you” will suffer these outcomes from the Lord
 - It will be so sudden that it will be like they dreamed the whole thing
- In the case of the Assyrians, we have already looked in this course at how that happens
 - In chapter 37 we read how the angel of the Lord will go out and destroy the entire Assyrian army in a single moment
 - Defending the city of Jerusalem in a single moment
 - At that earlier time, we also learned this moment with Assyria when they attack the city and sieged it
 - But never penetrated is a foreshadowing of the same event later in Israel’s history

- In a later time, we know another army converges on Israel and fails to breach its walls...and God comes to its rescue

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

Zechariah 14:3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

Zechariah 14:4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Zechariah 14:5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

Zechariah 14:6 In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.

Zechariah 14:7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

Zechariah 14:8 And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.

- This scene mirrors the one Isaiah will describe later in chapter 37
 - This moment in Zechariah is a part of the judgment that comes upon Israel for their willingness to enter into a covenant with the Antichrist
 - We're now seeing Isaiah beginning to introduce those parallels between the two events
 - Here's another parallel...

Isaiah 29:9 Be delayed and wait,
 Blind yourselves and be blind;
 They become drunk, but not with wine,
 They stagger, but not with strong drink.

Isaiah 29:10 For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep,
 He has shut your eyes, the prophets;
 And He has covered your heads, the seers.

Is. 29:11 The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

Is. 29:12 Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this." And he will say, "I cannot read."

- Isaiah is talking to the Jews who will experience this coming judgment at the hands of the Assyrians
 - They are going to be blinded spiritually
 - They are like their leaders, the drunkards who stagger with strong drink
 - And the Lord is the One Who put them in this state of blindness
 - He covered their eyes and silenced their seers
 - They will have the words of Isaiah, but they will be like someone who can't read
 - They won't be able to understand the words of Isaiah's prophecy and so they will not be able to avoid this coming judgment
- This part of the experience with Assyria also has a parallel for a future Israel
 - In the future time when the nation of Israel is left ignorant of God's word
 - And therefore they walk ignorantly into His planned judgement during Tribulation
 - And God is once again the one who causes the blindness so that the Jews would be assured of experiencing the judgment God has planned
 - But as with the Assyrian judgment, this blindness doesn't arrive at their destruction
 - Because in the end the Lord will rescue the nation and restore them
 - But not until they have endured the judgment He has determined they MUST experience
 - Paul describes this parallel in the future experience of Israel in the time leading to Tribulation

Rom. 11:7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

Rom. 11:8 just as it is written,

“GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.”

Rom. 11:9 And David says,

“ LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

Rom. 11:10 “ LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.”

Rom. 11:11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

Rom. 11:12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

- Today, the Jewish people are under a period of blindness instituted by God to ensure the nation remains under judgment
 - They will remain in this state until they endure the coming Tribulation which awaits them and the world
 - As with the first experience in preparation for the attack of Assyria, this stupor in by the hand of God
 - And it last until God releases them from that blindness...

Is. 29:13 Then the Lord said,

“Because this people draw near with their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from Me,
And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

Is. 29:14 Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous;

And the wisdom of their wise men will perish,
And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.”

Is. 29:15 Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD,

And whose deeds are done in a dark place,
And they say, “Who sees us?” or “Who knows us?”

Is. 29:16 You turn things around!

Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay,
That what is made would say to its maker, “He did not make me”;
Or what is formed say to him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?

- Because of their hypocrisy and sin against God and their unwillingness to follow him from the beginning, God prepares a final moment of judgment
 - This sin began with the leaders who led Israel astray in Isaiah's day
 - And it continued all the way until Jesus saw this same pattern among the leaders in His day

Matt. 15:1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,
Matt. 15:2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

Matt. 15:3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

Matt. 15:4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'

Matt. 15:5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,"'

Matt. 15:6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Matt. 15:7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

Matt. 15:8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,

BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

Matt. 15:9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

- Jesus says, that Isaiah's words were speaking of Israel's leaders even beyond the day in which he spoke them
 - He was prophesying of the leadership of Israel throughout the time of judgment that began in Isaiah's day
- In response, first God made them blind to prevent them from understanding Isaiah's explanation of how the judgment would come
 - In the future day, the Jews are hardened as Paul says to prevent them from knowing the Gospel
 - In the time of Assyria, God brings the judgment to a climax with the Assyrian siege of the city of Jerusalem
 - This was the "tribulation" for the Jews of Isaiah's day
 - In the last days, the final climatic judgment against the Jews will be the seven years of the Tribulation

- And here Isaiah refers directly to that future judgment with the description of the “wondrously marvelous” dealing that God brings
 - The word for marvelously is para, which literally means “in a surpassingly extraordinary way”
- Obviously, we’re talking about God doing something out of the ordinary even for God
 - We’re talking about the Great Tribulation, something unlike any kind of judgment God has ever brought upon the world
- This coming judgment reveals the secrets and weaknesses of men
 - It brings them down from the haughtiness in which they have come to imagine themselves to be their own gods
 - It shows them how truly pitiful they are in comparison with their Creator
 - God’s wrath poured out against His own creation
 - But just as Isaiah’s parables suggested, this judgment is but for a little while...

Is. 29:17 Is it not yet just a little while

Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field,

And the fertile field will be considered as a forest?

Is. 29:18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book,

And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

Is. 29:19 The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD,

And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Is. 29:20 For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished,

Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off;

Is. 29:21 Who cause a person to be indicted by a word,

And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate,

And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.

- In v.17, we’re told God will return to favor Israel
 - And at the conclusion of His judgment, sowing begins
 - God begins planting “seeds” to ensure that His judgment arrives at good things happening for Israel

- On that day, the deaf will hear again
 - The blind will see again and come to know the Holy Ones of Israel
 - Jewish rabbinical leaders were well known for their ability to memorize the entire Old Testament word for word in Hebrew
 - Yet they missed their Messiah because they're understanding of the text was never revealed by the Holy Spirit
 - Instead they relied on the interpretation of Scripture they received from the commentaries written by former rabbis...
 - The leaders who Jesus described who stumbled in drunkenness from spiritual blindness
- Of course, in Isaiah's day this new vision was accomplished through an appeal to God for His protection and counsel
 - As we'll study in detail in chapter 37, Hezekiah famously receives the threatening letter from the Assyrian commander stationed outside the city walls
 - And Hezekiah spreads it out before the Lord and prays to God

Is. 37:20 “Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God.”

- And in answer to this appeal, God promises to fight this battle and deliver Jerusalem
- In the End Times, we know the Lord returns in response to the cry of the Jews in Jerusalem, according to the words of Psalm 80:

Psa. 80:2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your power
And come to save us!

Psa. 80:3 O God, restore us

And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.

- Then the Lord comes to defend and secure Israel as Zechariah describes
 - And in Isaiah's day, the rescue came as the Lord fought the battle for them, destroying the Assyrian army

Is. 29:22 ¶ Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

“Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now turn pale;

Is. 29:23 But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst,

They will sanctify My name;

Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob

And will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

Is. 29:24 “Those who err in mind will know the truth,

And those who criticize will accept instruction.

- Clearly, we see Isaiah reflecting the way God brings these two respective periods of judgment to a positive end for the nation of Israel
 - Remember, as we've said before, these statements are true with respect to Israel as a nation
 - They are not meant to apply to every individual Jew
 - Just like the analogy of the lake of water
 - On any given day the specific molecules of water change
 - But the lake as a whole remains
 - Now in the beginning of the next chapter, we see Isaiah address specifically the woes for Israel in Hezekiah's day for their willingness to seek a covenant with Egypt

Is. 30:1 ¶ “Wo to the rebellious children,” declares the LORD,

“Who execute a plan, but not Mine,

And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit,

In order to add sin to sin;

Is. 30:2 Who proceed down to Egypt

Without consulting Me,

To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh

And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

Is. 30:3 “Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame

And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation.

Is. 30:4 “For their princes are at Zoan

And their ambassadors arrive at Hanes.

Is. 30:5 “Everyone will be ashamed because of a people who cannot profit them,

Who are not for help or profit, but for shame and also for reproach.”

Is. 30:6 ¶ The oracle concerning the beasts of the Negev.

Through a land of distress and anguish,

From where come lioness and lion, viper and flying serpent,

They carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys
 And their treasures on camels' humps,
 To a people who cannot profit them;

Is. 30:7 Even Egypt, whose help is vain and empty.

Therefore, I have called her
 " Rahab who has been exterminated."

- Isaiah pronounces another woe to Israel
 - Note the details of this circumstances
 - They are rebellious children
 - They execute a plan of their own making, not of God
 - And through this plan they multiply their sin
 - They take refuge with Egypt and the Pharaoh
 - But it will be to the shame of Israel
 - Because this alliance will not profit Israel
 - In the end Egypt did nothing for them
 - They never came to Israel's aid
- Isaiah continues in verse 6 to describe a prophecy concerning this would be partner of Israel: Egypt
 - Israel sends its treasures through a land of distress (their land) and to the Negev, which just mean south to Egypt
 - But this wealth cannot profit them
 - The reference to the name Rahab is interesting and classic Isaiah creative use of language
 - The word is used as a name for Egypt throughout the OT
 - But it also means a big mouth, someone who is all talk
 - And it can also mean hippo
 - An animal that epitomizes sitting around lazily with a big mouth

- Chapter 30 continues with a description on how God will bring the Assyrians against them followed by how He will judge the Assyrians themselves

Is. 30:8 Now go, write it on a tablet before them

And inscribe it on a scroll,
That it may serve in the time to come
As a witness forever.

Is. 30:9 For this is a rebellious people, false sons,

Sons who refuse to listen
To the instruction of the LORD;

Is. 30:10 Who say to the seers, "You must not see visions";

And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right,
Speak to us pleasant words,
Prophesy illusions.

Is. 30:11 "Get out of the way, turn aside from the path,

Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."

Is. 30:12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel,

" Since you have rejected this word
And have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them,

Is. 30:13 Therefore this iniquity will be to you

Like a breach about to fall,
A bulge in a high wall,
Whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant,

Is. 30:14 Whose collapse is like the smashing of a potter's jar,

So ruthlessly shattered
That a sherd will not be found among its pieces
To take fire from a hearth
Or to scoop water from a cistern."

Is. 30:15 For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said,

"In repentance and rest you will be saved,
In quietness and trust is your strength."
But you were not willing,

Is. 30:16 And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses,"

Therefore you shall flee!
"And we will ride on swift horses,"
Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift.

Is. 30:17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one man;

You will flee at the threat of five,
Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top
And as a signal on a hill.

Is. 30:18 ¶ Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,

And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.
For the LORD is a God of justice;

How blessed are all those who long for Him.

- Isaiah records this words against Israel as a record of their disobedience
 - And he uses vivid language to describe some of the destruction the city walls suffered at the hands of the Assyrians
 - Though God gave them a sensible word through Isaiah
 - To rest and be at peace over the Assyrian invasion
 - Instead they sought an unholy alliance
 - They tried to flee on horses to Egypt to make an alliance
 - Instead, they will flee their attackers
 - But God wait on high to be gracious to them in a future time