

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 29 — Woe to Ariel and the Marvelous Work of God

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 29 turns directly toward:

Jerusalem.

The city is called:

“Ariel.”

The name likely carries the idea of:

A lion of God.

Or:

An altar hearth.

Both ideas fit the chapter.

Jerusalem was:

The city of David.

The place of sacrifice.

The center of worship.

The city associated with God’s covenant presence.

Yet Isaiah announces:

“Woe to Ariel.”

That is sobering.

Religious privilege did not make Jerusalem immune to:

Correction.

Discipline.

Judgment.

The people continued:

Festivals.

Sacrifices.

Religious cycles.

But their hearts were:

Far from God.

They knew how to:

Worship outwardly.

Speak religiously.

Maintain ritual.

Yet God saw:

Spiritual blindness.

Empty religion.

Pride.

Secret rebellion.

The chapter begins with Jerusalem being:

Pressed.

Besieged.

Brought low.

But then something remarkable happens.

The enemies surrounding Zion appear overwhelming.

Yet God says they will become like:

Dust.

Chaff.

A dream that disappears when a person wakes.

Jerusalem is humbled.

Then her enemies are humbled.

The chapter then turns from:

Physical siege.

To:

Spiritual blindness.

The people have revelation.

But it is like:

A sealed scroll.

The educated person says:

“I cannot read it because it is sealed.”

The uneducated person says:

“I cannot read.”

The problem is not merely:

Literacy.

The deeper problem is:

A heart closed to God.

Then the Lord exposes the religious condition of the people:

“These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”

Jesus later quotes this passage when confronting:

Religious hypocrisy.

Human tradition.

Outward worship without inward devotion.

Then God promises:

“I will again do a wonderful thing among this people—a marvelous work!”

Human wisdom will fail.

Human intelligence will be humbled.

God will demonstrate that His ways exceed:

Human cleverness.

The chapter then exposes those who attempt to hide their plans from God.

They think:

“Who sees us? Who will know?”

Isaiah answers with the image of:

Potter.

Clay.

Creation cannot deny:

The Creator.

The chapter ends with:

Restoration.

The deaf hear.

The blind see.

The humble rejoice.

The needy find joy in:

The Holy One of Israel.

The ruthless disappear.

The mockers are removed.

Justice is restored.

Jacob's shame ends.

Children honor God.

The wayward gain understanding.

Those who once complained:

Receive instruction.

The central truth of Isaiah 29 is:

Religious privilege without heartfelt devotion produces spiritual blindness and judgment, but the Lord will humble both His rebellious people and their enemies, expose empty worship and secret pride, perform a marvelous work beyond human wisdom, and ultimately restore sight, understanding, justice, humility, and true worship among His people.

I. WOE TO ARIEL

Isaiah 29:1 — Religious Routine Without Spiritual Life

“Woe to Ariel, Ariel, the city where David once camped! Add year to year, let the cycle of sacrifices continue.”

Jerusalem had:

History.

Heritage.

Sacrifices.

Festivals.

The city where:

David ruled.

The temple stood.

Worship continued.

Yet God says:

“Woe.”

The problem is:

Ritual without heart.

Cross References

2 Samuel 5:7

David captured the stronghold of Zion, which became known as the City of David and formed the heart of Jerusalem’s royal identity.

2 Samuel 5:9

After taking the stronghold, David established his residence there and expanded the city around it.

Luke 19:43

Jesus warned Jerusalem that a time would come when enemies would surround the city, build siege works against it, and close it in from every side.

Spiritual Principle

Religious history cannot replace present faithfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A place can have a glorious spiritual past and still need repentance today.

II. GOD BRINGS DISTRESS UPON ARIEL

Isaiah 29:2 — Sorrow and Mourning

“Yet I will press Ariel with distress; there will be sorrow and mourning, and it will be to Me like an altar hearth.”

Jerusalem's sacrifices continued.

But now:

The city itself becomes like an altar hearth.

What had been associated with:

Sacrifice.

Becomes associated with:

Judgment.

Cross References

Lamentations 1:1

Jerusalem, once crowded and honored, is pictured sitting lonely and grieving after devastation.

Jeremiah 52:4

Babylonian forces came against Jerusalem, surrounded it, and built siege works around the city.

Luke 19:44

Jesus foretold Jerusalem's destruction because the city failed to recognize the time of God's visitation.

Spiritual Principle

Privilege increases responsibility.

III. GOD ENCAMPs AGAINST JERUSALEM

Isaiah 29:3 — Siege Around the City

"I will encamp all around you, I will lay siege against you with towers, and raise siege works against you."

The shocking truth is:

God Himself says:

"I will."

The enemy may carry out the siege.

But:

God is sovereign over it.

Cross References

2 Kings 25:1

Nebuchadnezzar's army surrounded Jerusalem, built siege works, and placed the city under prolonged military pressure.

Ezekiel 4:2

Ezekiel was instructed to portray Jerusalem under siege with ramps, camps, and battering forces around it.

Jeremiah 6:6

God calls for siege works to be raised against Jerusalem because oppression and corruption had filled the city.

Spiritual Principle

God can use external pressure to confront internal rebellion.

IV. JERUSALEM IS BROUGHT LOW

Isaiah 29:4 — A Voice from the Dust

“You will be brought low; from the ground your speech will whisper, your voice will come ghostlike from the dust, like a faint whisper from the earth.”

The proud city is:

Humbled.

Its voice becomes:

Weak.

Faint.

Dust-level.

Cross References

Isaiah 8:19

Mediums and spiritists are described as whispering and muttering, though God's people are commanded to seek Him instead.

1 Samuel 28:8

Saul secretly sought a medium at night, disguising himself and requesting forbidden spiritual guidance.

Psalms 44:25

God's afflicted people describe themselves as brought down into the dust, with their bodies pressed to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

Pride speaks loudly.

Humbling brings the voice down to dust.

V. JERUSALEM'S ENEMIES BECOME LIKE DUST

Isaiah 29:5 — Sudden Reversal

“But your many enemies will become like fine dust, the ruthless hordes like blowing chaff. Suddenly, in an instant,”

The chapter changes direction.

Jerusalem is humbled.

Then:

Her enemies.

They seem:

Numerous.

Ruthless.

Overwhelming.

God says:

Dust.

Chaff.

Cross References

Psalm 1:4

The wicked are compared to chaff that the wind drives away because they lack lasting stability.

Psalm 35:5

The enemies of God's servant are pictured becoming like chaff blown before the wind under divine judgment.

Zephaniah 2:2

Judgment is described as coming before people are swept away like chaff driven by the wind.

Spiritual Principle

Numbers do not create permanence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A multitude against God can become dust in an instant.

VI. THE LORD VISITS WITH POWER

Isaiah 29:6 — Thunder, Earthquake, Storm, and Fire

“You will be visited by the Lord Almighty—with thunder, earthquake, and great noise, with whirlwind and storm, and with flames of consuming fire.”

The Lord’s visitation is:

Powerful.

Overwhelming.

Unmistakable.

Cross References

Exodus 19:18

Mount Sinai shook violently while smoke rose because the Lord descended in fire and revealed His holy presence.

Revelation 8:5

Heavenly judgment is accompanied by thunder, voices, lightning, and an earthquake.

Psalms 18:7

The earth trembles and foundations shake when God rises in anger and acts in power.

Spiritual Principle

The God people ignore quietly can reveal Himself unmistakably.

VII. THE ATTACKING NATIONS VANISH LIKE A DREAM

Isaiah 29:7 — Enemies Become Unsubstantial

“The hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her stronghold, will be like a dream, a vision in the night.”

The nations appear:

Real.

Dangerous.

Immediate.

Yet God says:

Like a dream.

Cross References

Psalm 73:20

The prosperity of the wicked is compared to a dream that disappears when a person awakens, because God brings their seeming security to an end.

Zechariah 12:9

God promises to destroy the nations that come against Jerusalem according to His purpose.

Job 20:8

The wicked are pictured passing away like a dream and disappearing like a vision of the night.

Spiritual Principle

What terrifies us today may disappear quickly when God acts.

VIII. THE NATIONS AWAKEN EMPTY

Isaiah 29:8 — Hungry and Thirsty After the Dream

“Like a hungry man who dreams he is eating, but awakens hungry still; like a thirsty man who dreams he is drinking, but wakes faint and still thirsty—so it will be with the multitudes of nations that fight against Mount Zion.”

The enemies imagine:

Victory.

Conquest.

Satisfaction.

But awaken with:

Nothing.

Cross References

Zechariah 12:3

Jerusalem becomes like a heavy stone that injures those who attempt to lift or move it in hostility.

Job 20:5

The triumph of the wicked is temporary and their joy lasts only a short time.

Micah 4:11

Many nations gather against Zion expecting victory, but they do not understand God's larger purpose.

Spiritual Principle

Plans against God may promise satisfaction and produce emptiness.

IX. SPIRITUAL DRUNKENNESS WITHOUT WINE

Isaiah 29:9 — Stunned and Blind

“Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not from wine; they stagger, but not from beer.”

The blindness is:

Spiritual.

They stagger:

Without alcohol.

Their thinking has become:

Confused.

Dull.

Insensitive.

Cross References

Isaiah 28:7

Priests and prophets are described as staggering under intoxication and stumbling in judgment.

Habakkuk 1:5

God warns that He is about to perform a work so astonishing that people would struggle to believe it even if they were told.

Isaiah 51:21

Jerusalem is described as afflicted and staggering, not merely from literal wine but from the cup of divine judgment.

Spiritual Principle

A person can be physically sober and spiritually disoriented.

X. A SPIRIT OF DEEP SLEEP

Isaiah 29:10 — Prophets and Seers Blinded

“For the Lord has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep. He has shut your eyes—the prophets; He has covered your heads—the seers.”

Persistent rejection of revelation produces:

Judicial blindness.

This echoes Isaiah 6.

God’s revelation had been:

Repeatedly resisted.

Now the people experience:

Hardening.

Cross References

Romans 11:8

Paul cites prophetic language saying God gave hardened people a spirit of stupor, eyes that did not see, and ears that did not hear.

Isaiah 6:10

Isaiah’s ministry includes the sobering reality that persistent resistance to God’s Word results in increasing hardness and inability to respond.

Deuteronomy 29:4

Moses tells Israel that despite seeing God’s acts, they had not yet been given hearts fully understanding what those acts meant.

Spiritual Principle

Repeatedly rejecting truth can reduce our ability to recognize truth.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not keep saying no to light and assume you will always be able to see clearly later.

XI. THE VISION BECOMES LIKE A SEALED SCROLL

Isaiah 29:11 — Revelation Present but Unread

“For you this whole vision is nothing but words in a sealed scroll. When you give it to someone who can read and say, ‘Read this, please,’ they answer, ‘I cannot; it is sealed.’”

They possess:

The scroll.

Yet do not receive:

Its meaning.

The issue is not merely availability.

It is:

Spiritual access.

Cross References

Revelation 5:1

John sees a scroll sealed securely, and the question arises concerning who has authority to open and reveal what it contains.

Daniel 12:4

Daniel is told that certain prophetic words are to be sealed until the appointed time.

Revelation 22:10

In contrast to Daniel’s instruction, John is told not to seal the prophetic words because the time is near.

Spiritual Principle

Having Scripture nearby does not guarantee understanding if the heart remains closed.

XII. THE UNREAD PERSON ALSO CANNOT READ

Isaiah 29:12 — Ignorance Without Understanding

“Or when you give the scroll to someone who cannot read and say, ‘Read this, please,’ they answer, ‘I don’t know how to read.’”

The educated person says:

Sealed.

The uneducated person says:

Unable.

Both remain without:

Understanding.

Cross References

Acts 8:31

The Ethiopian official admits that he needs someone to guide him in understanding the Scripture he is reading.

Matthew 11:25

Jesus thanks the Father for revealing spiritual truth to the humble rather than making it dependent upon worldly intellectual status.

1 Corinthians 1:27

God chooses what the world considers foolish and weak to humble those who trust in human wisdom and strength.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual understanding is not guaranteed by education or prevented by lack of education.

XIII. THE PEOPLE HONOR GOD WITH THEIR LIPS BUT NOT THEIR HEARTS

Isaiah 29:13 — Empty Worship

“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. Their worship of Me is made up only of human rules taught by men.’”

This is one of the chapter’s central indictments.

They:

Say the right things.

Attend worship.

Use religious language.

Yet:

Their hearts are distant.

The worship has become:

Mechanical.

Traditional.

Humanly regulated.

Spiritually empty.

Cross References

Matthew 15:8

Jesus quotes Isaiah and applies the warning to people who honor God verbally while allowing their hearts to remain far from Him.

Mark 7:6

Jesus again applies Isaiah's words to religious hypocrisy in which outward honor hides inward distance from God.

Ezekiel 33:31

People come to hear God's messenger and speak as though they are interested, but their hearts remain controlled by selfish desire and they do not obey what they hear.

Spiritual Principle

God listens to:

The mouth.

And examines:

The heart.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Worship is empty when the lips arrive before God but the heart stays home.

XIV. GOD WILL DO A MARVELOUS WORK

Isaiah 29:14 — Human Wisdom Brought to Nothing

**“Therefore I will again do a wonderful thing among this people—a marvelous work!
The wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”**

God will act in a way that exposes:

Human wisdom.

Religious cleverness.

Intellectual pride.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:19

Paul quotes Isaiah to show that God overturns the wisdom of those who consider themselves wise apart from Him.

Jeremiah 8:9

Those who reject the Lord's Word may still claim wisdom, but their supposed wisdom becomes foolishness.

Obadiah 1:8

God announces that He will destroy worldly wisdom and understanding from those who pride themselves upon it.

Spiritual Principle

God's wisdom does not need human approval.

Key Truth

When God performs His marvelous work, human brilliance can be revealed as blindness.

XV. PEOPLE TRY TO HIDE THEIR PLANS FROM GOD

Isaiah 29:15 — “Who Sees Us?”

“Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, ‘Who sees us? Who will know?’”

The issue is:

Secret rebellion.

They believe darkness provides:

Privacy.

Protection.

Cover.

From:

God.

Cross References

Psalm 94:7

The wicked convince themselves that the Lord does not see their actions and that God will not notice what they are doing.

Job 34:22

There is no darkness deep enough for evildoers to hide themselves from God's sight.

Ezekiel 8:12

Israel's leaders practice idolatry secretly and tell themselves that the Lord does not see what is happening.

Spiritual Principle

Darkness hides things from people.

Never from God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Secret sin is secret only from human beings.

XVI. THE CLAY CANNOT DENY THE POTTER

Isaiah 29:16 — Creation Cannot Overrule the Creator

“You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay? Shall the thing formed say to the one who formed it, ‘You did not make me’? Shall the creation say to its Creator, ‘You have no understanding’?”

This is the height of human arrogance.

The created object tells:

The Creator.

You did not make me.

You do not understand.

Isaiah says:

Everything is upside down.

Cross References

Romans 9:20

Paul asks who a human being is to argue defiantly against God, comparing humanity to pottery challenging the potter.

Jeremiah 18:6

God tells Israel that as clay is in the potter's hand, so His people are under His sovereign authority.

Isaiah 45:9

Isaiah warns against arguing with the Creator, comparing it to clay questioning the potter who shaped it.

Spiritual Principle

Human autonomy does not erase:

Divine ownership.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The clay gains nothing by pretending there is no Potter.

XVII. GOD WILL TRANSFORM THE LAND

Isaiah 29:17 — Lebanon Becomes Fertile

“In a very short time, Lebanon will become a fertile field, and the fertile field will seem like a forest.”

The chapter turns toward:

Restoration.

Change.

Fruitfulness.

What was:

Unfruitful.

Becomes:

Productive.

Cross References

Isaiah 32:15

When God pours out His Spirit, wilderness becomes fruitful and productive land becomes abundant like a forest.

Isaiah 35:1

The desert and wilderness are pictured rejoicing, blooming, and becoming fruitful under God's restoring power.

Hosea 14:5

God promises to refresh Israel like dew so that the people blossom and grow with renewed life.

Spiritual Principle

God can transform barren conditions quickly.

XVIII. THE DEAF HEAR AND THE BLIND SEE

Isaiah 29:18 — Spiritual Perception Restored

“In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.”

Earlier:

The scroll was sealed.

People could not understand.

Now:

The deaf hear.

The blind see.

God reverses:

Spiritual blindness.

Cross References

Matthew 11:5

Jesus points to the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, the deaf hearing, and good news being proclaimed as signs of messianic fulfillment.

Isaiah 35:5

Isaiah promises that the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Luke 4:18

Jesus announces His mission to proclaim good news, freedom, recovery of sight, and liberation under God's saving work.

Spiritual Principle

The God who judges blindness can also restore sight.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A sealed book can become an open message when God opens the heart.

XIX. THE HUMBLE REJOICE

Isaiah 29:19 — Joy in the Holy One of Israel

“The humble will rejoice in the Lord; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”

The people who rejoice are:

Humble.

Needy.

They are not trusting:

Themselves.

They rejoice in:

The Lord.

Cross References

Matthew 5:5

Jesus declares the meek blessed and promises that they will inherit the earth.

Psalms 22:26

The poor will eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord will praise Him.

Zephaniah 3:12

God promises to preserve a humble and lowly people who take refuge in the Lord's name.

Spiritual Principle

Humility creates room for joy in God.

XX. THE RUTHLESS AND MOCKERS DISAPPEAR

Isaiah 29:20 — Evil Loses Its Voice

“The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who look for evil will be cut off—”

Three groups disappear:

Ruthless people.

Mockers.

Those looking for opportunities to do evil.

Cross References

Psalms 1:6

The Lord watches over the path of the righteous, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

Proverbs 1:22

Wisdom challenges mockers who delight in scorn and fools who reject knowledge.

Job 15:20

The wicked person lives under inner distress and instability because wrongdoing carries consequences.

Spiritual Principle

Mockery is temporary.

God's truth is permanent.

XXI. GOD EXPOSES CORRUPT JUSTICE

Isaiah 29:21 — The Innocent Trapped

“Those who make a man guilty with a word, who trap the defender in court, and with false testimony deny justice to the innocent.”

God condemns:

False accusation.

Courtroom manipulation.

Legal traps.

Denial of justice.

Cross References

Amos 5:10

Corrupt people hate those who speak honestly in court and despise the person who tells the truth.

Amos 5:12

God knows the people's many sins, including oppressing the innocent, accepting bribes, and denying justice to the poor.

Matthew 22:15

Religious leaders deliberately plotted how they might trap Jesus through His words.

Spiritual Principle

God cares about:

Courtrooms.

Evidence.

Truth.

Justice.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Using words to make an innocent person guilty is an offense before the God of truth.

XXII. JACOB'S SHAME WILL END

Isaiah 29:22 — The Redeemer Speaks

**“Therefore this is what the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, says to the house of Jacob:
‘No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale.’”**

The Lord identifies Himself as:

Redeemer.

Judgment is not:

The final chapter.

Shame will:

End.

Cross References

Genesis 15:7

God reminds Abraham that He was the One who brought him out and established His covenant purpose with him.

Nehemiah 9:7

God is praised for choosing Abram, bringing him out, and giving him the name Abraham according to His covenant plan.

Psalms 34:5

Those who look to the Lord are radiant, and their faces are not ultimately covered with shame.

Spiritual Principle

The God who disciplines Jacob is still:

Jacob's Redeemer.

XXIII. THE CHILDREN BECOME A WORK OF GOD'S HANDS

Isaiah 29:23 — God's Name Kept Holy

“When they see among them their children, the work of My hands, they will keep My name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.”

Restoration becomes visible in:

The next generation.

The children are called:

“The work of My hands.”

The response is:

Holiness.

Reverence.

Awe.

Cross References

Ezekiel 36:23

God promises to vindicate His great and holy name among the nations so people will recognize His holiness.

Matthew 6:9

Jesus teaches His disciples to pray that the Father's name be honored as holy.

1 Peter 3:15

Believers are instructed to set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts and respond with reverent readiness.

Spiritual Principle

True restoration causes people to treat God's name differently.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God renews a people, reverence returns to worship.

XXIV. THE WAYWARD GAIN UNDERSTANDING

Isaiah 29:24 — Complainers Receive Instruction

“Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction.”

What an ending.

Earlier:

Blindness.

Mockery.

A sealed scroll.

Empty worship.

Now:

Understanding.

Instruction.

Teachability.

Cross References

Isaiah 32:4

Those once hasty and confused in understanding will gain knowledge, and unclear speech will become plain.

John 6:45

Jesus says that those who truly hear and learn from the Father come to Him.

1 Corinthians 14:20

Believers are told not to remain childish in understanding but to grow into mature thinking.

Spiritual Principle

God can transform:

Resistance.

Into:

Teachability.

Key Truth

The chapter begins with religious people who cannot see and ends with wayward people learning truth.

XXV. TEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 29

1. Religious Privilege Does Not Cancel Accountability

Jerusalem was:

David's city.

The place of sacrifice.

Yet:

Judgment came.

Principle:

A spiritual heritage cannot substitute for present obedience.

2. God Can Humble His Own People

Ariel is brought:

Low.

Principle:

God loves His people too much to leave pride unchallenged.

3. God Can Destroy Overwhelming Enemies Suddenly

The nations become:

Dust.

Chaff.

Dreams.

Principle:

What surrounds you does not surround God.

4. Spiritual Blindness Is Dangerous

The scroll is present.

Yet:

Unread.

Principle:

Possessing revelation is not the same as receiving revelation.

5. Empty Worship Does Not Please God

Lips near.

Hearts far.

Principle:

God wants truthful worship from the whole person.

6. Human Wisdom Cannot Outsmart God

Principle:

The Creator never becomes confused by the plans of the creature.

7. Secret Sin Is Not Secret from God

Principle:

Darkness conceals from people, never from the Lord.

8. God Can Restore Spiritual Sight

The deaf hear.

The blind see.

Principle:

Spiritual blindness need not be the final condition.

9. God Defends Justice

False accusers are judged.

Principle:

Truth matters to God in worship and in court.

10. God Can Make the Wayward Teachable

Principle:

Grace can turn stubborn resistance into understanding.

XXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT WORSHIP

Worship can be:

External.

Verbal.

Traditional.

And still:

Empty.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not merely ask:

“What did you say?”

He also asks:

“Where was your heart?”

XXVII. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT THE HEART

Their mouths are:

Near.

Their hearts:

Far.

Spiritual Principle

Physical proximity to religious things does not equal spiritual intimacy with God.

XXVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Blindness can develop through:

Resistance.

Pride.

Unbelief.

Habitual rejection.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never assume yesterday's light guarantees tomorrow's clarity if today's truth is continually rejected.

XXIX. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT SCRIPTURE

The people possess:

A scroll.

Yet cannot benefit from it.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture should be approached with:

Humility.

Teachability.

Dependence upon God.

XXX. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT HUMAN TRADITION

The problem is not every tradition.

The problem is when:

Human rules.

Replace:

Living obedience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Tradition becomes dangerous when we obey the form while ignoring the God the form was meant to honor.

XXXI. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT HUMAN WISDOM

The wise become:

Foolish.

The intelligent lose:

Their advantage.

Spiritual Principle

Human brilliance does not place anyone above revelation.

XXXII. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT SECRET PLANS

People think:

No one knows.

God knows.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Before you ask whether people can discover it, ask whether God approves it.

XXXIII. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT CREATOR AND CREATION

God is:

Potter.

Humanity:

Clay.

Spiritual Principle

The creature is dependent upon:

The Creator.

For:

Existence.

Identity.

Purpose.

XXXIV. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT RESTORATION

The chapter's final movement is:

Hopeful.

Deaf:

Hear.

Blind:

See.

Humble:

Rejoice.

Wayward:

Understand.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can reverse spiritual conditions that once looked permanent.

XXXV. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

God opposes those who:

Frame the innocent.

Manipulate testimony.

Corrupt courts.

Spiritual Principle

God's holiness includes concern for public justice.

XXXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 29 TEACHES ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION

Children are called:

The work of God's hands.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One mark of restoration is seeing another generation learn to honor the Lord.

XXXVII. ARIEL — THE CITY OF DAVID

Jerusalem carried:

Memory.

History.

Identity.

But those privileges brought:

Responsibility.

Spiritual Principle

A great past is a gift.

It is not permission for present unfaithfulness.

XXXVIII. THE ALTAR HEARTH

Ariel may carry the sense of:

Altar hearth.

The city associated with:

Sacrifice.

Would itself experience:

Judgment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Religious activity does not shield unrepentant hearts from God's holiness.

XXXIX. THE CITY BROUGHT TO THE DUST

The voice that once sounded:

Strong.

Becomes:

A whisper.

Spiritual Principle

God knows how to lower what pride has elevated.

XL. THE ENEMY LIKE DUST

The same God who humbles:

Jerusalem.

Can humble:

Jerusalem's enemies.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's discipline of His people does not mean He has surrendered them to evil.

XLI. THE ENEMY LIKE A DREAM

Imagine waking from a nightmare.

The fear felt:

Real.

Then:

Gone.

Spiritual Principle

God can make overwhelming opposition disappear faster than we imagined possible.

XLII. DRUNK WITHOUT WINE

This is:

Spiritual confusion.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A person can walk straight physically while staggering spiritually.

XLIII. THE SEALED SCROLL

A closed heart can make:

An open Bible.

Function like:

A sealed book.

Spiritual Principle

The greatest barrier to understanding may not be lack of information but unwillingness to receive truth.

XLIV. LIPS NEAR, HEART FAR

This is the great danger of:

Religious performance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never let your mouth travel farther toward God than your heart.

XLV. THE MARVELOUS WORK

God says:

He will act.

Human wisdom:

Will fail.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes God allows human explanations to collapse so His wisdom becomes unmistakable.

XLVI. “WHO SEES US?”

God does.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is never:

“Can I hide this?”

The question is:

“Can I do this before God?”

XLVII. POTTER AND CLAY

The clay may resist.

It cannot:

Become the Potter.

Spiritual Principle

Human rebellion cannot reverse the Creator-creature distinction.

XLVIII. LEBANON TRANSFORMED

God can change:

Barren.

To:

Fruitful.

Fruitful.

To:

Abundant.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not judge God's future by today's landscape.

XLIX. THE DEAF HEAR

The words they could not receive:

Become understandable.

Spiritual Principle

God can open ears that resistance once closed.

L. THE BLIND SEE

Darkness is:

Temporary.

Where God grants:

Sight.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Spiritual sight is one of God's greatest gifts.

LI. THE HUMBLE REJOICE

The humble do not need:

Self-exaltation.

Their joy is:

The Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Humility frees the soul to rejoice in God instead of constantly defending itself.

LII. THE MOCKERS DISAPPEAR

Those who mocked truth:

Do not outlast:

Truth.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not envy the temporary confidence of those who scorn God.

LIII. COURTROOM CORRUPTION

Isaiah identifies:

False accusation.

Legal manipulation.

Perverted justice.

Spiritual Principle

The same God who cares about worship cares about verdicts.

LIV. JACOB WITHOUT SHAME

The chapter moves from:

Humiliation.

To:

Restored honor.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can remove shame without denying the discipline that preceded restoration.

LV. CHILDREN AS THE WORK OF GOD'S HANDS

The future generation becomes evidence of:

Grace.

Spiritual Principle

God's restoration is often visible in what happens after us, not merely to us.

LVI. WAYWARD PEOPLE BECOME TEACHABLE

This is one of the most hopeful statements in the chapter.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never assume a stubborn heart must remain stubborn forever.

LVII. EIGHT GREAT CONTRASTS IN ISAIAH 29

- 1. Religious Activity → Heart Distance**
- 2. Proud Ariel → Humbled Ariel**
- 3. Surrounding Nations → Blowing Chaff**
- 4. Open Revelation → Sealed Understanding**
- 5. Human Wisdom → Marvelous Divine Work**
- 6. Hidden Plans → God's Full Knowledge**
- 7. Blindness → Sight**
- 8. Waywardness → Understanding**

Key Truth

God exposes the emptiness of outward religion and human pride, but He is also able to restore sight, humility, understanding, justice, and true worship.

LVIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What city is called Ariel?

Jerusalem.

Question 2

Why is Jerusalem under judgment despite continuing sacrifices?

Because religious routine had continued while genuine heart devotion had declined.

Question 3

What does God allow against Ariel?

Siege, distress, mourning, and humiliation.

Question 4

What happens to the nations attacking Jerusalem?

They become like fine dust, chaff, and a dream that disappears.

Question 5

What kind of drunkenness is described in verse 9?

Spiritual staggering and blindness rather than merely literal intoxication.

Question 6

What happens to the prophets and seers?

They become spiritually unable to perceive clearly.

Question 7

What is the vision compared to?

A sealed scroll.

Question 8

What does God say about the people's worship?

Their mouths and lips honor Him, but their hearts are far away.

Question 9

What did Jesus later do with Isaiah 29:13?

He quoted it when confronting religious hypocrisy and human tradition.

Question 10

What marvelous work will God perform?

He will overturn human wisdom and expose the limits of human intelligence.

Question 11

What do secret sinners think?

That no one sees or knows what they are doing.

Question 12

What image exposes their foolishness?

The clay denying or correcting the Potter.

Question 13

What future transformation is promised?

Barren conditions become fruitful.

Question 14

What happens to the deaf and blind?

The deaf hear and the blind see.

Question 15

Who rejoices in the Lord?

The humble and needy.

Question 16

What happens to the ruthless and mockers?

They disappear under judgment.

Question 17

What injustice does God condemn?

False accusations, legal traps, corrupt testimony, and denial of justice to the innocent.

Question 18

What happens to Jacob's shame?

It is removed.

Question 19

How will restored people treat God's name?

They will keep it holy and stand in awe of Him.

Question 20

What happens to the wayward?

They gain understanding and accept instruction.

LIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 29 asks several searching questions.

Is My Worship Coming from My Heart?

Do I:

Sing?

Pray?

Speak?

Attend?

While my heart remains:

Far away?

Am I Living on Spiritual History?

Am I depending on:

What my family believed?

What my church once was?

What I once experienced?

Have I Become Spiritually Blind Through Repeated Resistance?

What truth have I heard but refused to obey?

Is the Bible Open but My Heart Closed?

Do I read merely to:

Finish?

Argue?

Defend?

Or:

Hear God?

Have Human Traditions Replaced Living Obedience?

Am I more loyal to:

The way we have always done it.

Than:

What God has actually said?

Am I Trying to Hide Something from God?

What do I do:

In darkness?

In private?

When no one is watching?

Am I Treating the Potter Like Clay?

Do I tell God:

How He should think?

What He should approve?

How He should govern?

Do I Believe God Can Restore Spiritual Sight?

For:

Me?

My family?

My church?

Am I Humble Enough to Receive Instruction?

Or do I:

Complain?

Resist?

Mock?

Do I Care About Justice?

Would I ever use:

Words.

Influence.

Testimony.

To hurt someone falsely?

LX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Is Not Impressed by Lips That Worship Him While Hearts Live Far Away”

Jerusalem had:

Sacrifices.

Cycles.

Tradition.

History.

Yet:

God wanted the heart.

Principle:

True worship begins when the heart joins what the lips are saying.

LXI. RELIGIOUS ROUTINE WITHOUT REPENTANCE

The sacrifices continued:

Year after year.

But ritual cannot replace:

Relationship.

Spiritual Principle

Repetition of worship does not guarantee reality of worship.

LXII. GOD’S DISCIPLINE OF JERUSALEM

God brings:

Pressure.

Siege.

Humbling.

Why?

Because:

He is confronting rebellion.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Divine discipline is not proof that God has forgotten His people.

It may be proof that He refuses to ignore what is destroying them.

LXIII. GOD'S DEFEAT OF JERUSALEM'S ENEMIES

Those who attack Zion:

Appear powerful.

Then:

Vanish.

Spiritual Principle

God can discipline His people without giving their enemies ultimate victory.

LXIV. THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL SLEEP

Deep sleep means:

Insensitivity.

Lack of discernment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The most dangerous spiritual sleep is sleeping while believing you are awake.

LXV. THE BOOK YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND

The sealed scroll illustrates:

Closed perception.

Spiritual Principle

Understanding Scripture requires more than eyesight.

It requires:

Humility.

Faith.

Teachability.

LXVI. EMPTY RELIGION AND JESUS

Jesus directly used Isaiah 29:13.

This makes the warning especially important.

It applies whenever:

Human tradition.

Religious performance.

External conformity.

Replace:

Heart obedience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus still rejects worship that looks right outwardly while remaining distant inwardly.

LXVII. THE WISDOM GOD DESTROYS

God does not condemn:

Thinking.

Learning.

Intelligence.

He condemns:

Proud wisdom set against revelation.

Spiritual Principle

The problem is not having a mind.

It is using the mind to resist the One who gave it.

LXVIII. THE SECRET ROOM

No room is:

Dark enough.

Private enough.

Hidden enough.

To escape:

God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live privately in a way that can stand openly before God.

LXIX. THE POTTER'S RIGHTS

The Potter has authority over:

The clay.

Not because He is arbitrary.

But because:

He made it.

Spiritual Principle

Creation implies:

Ownership.

Purpose.

Accountability.

LXX. THE GOD WHO RESTORES PERCEPTION

The deaf:

Hear.

The blind:

See.

The wayward:

Understand.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who exposes blindness is also the God who gives sight.

LXXI. HUMILITY AND JOY

The humble rejoice:

In God.

Spiritual Principle

Pride must constantly protect itself.

Humility is free to rejoice.

LXXII. JUSTICE FOR THE INNOCENT

God is not indifferent to:

False accusations.

Court corruption.

Manipulation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A false word against the innocent is heard in heaven even when it succeeds on earth.

LXXIII. JACOB REDEEMED

The Lord is called:

The One who redeemed Abraham.

Now He speaks restoration over:

Jacob.

Spiritual Principle

God's redemptive faithfulness stretches across generations.

LXXIV. HOLY AWE RETURNS

Restoration produces:

Awe.

Reverence.

Holiness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One sign of genuine revival is that people stop treating God casually.

LXXV. FROM COMPLAINING TO LEARNING

Those who once complained:

Accept instruction.

Spiritual Principle

A transformed heart becomes teachable.

LXXVI. SEVEN GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISAIAH 29

1. Ariel Is Warned

Religious privilege does not excuse rebellion.

2. Ariel Is Humbled

God allows siege and distress.

3. Ariel's Enemies Are Humbled

The nations disappear like a dream.

4. Spiritual Blindness Is Exposed

The scroll seems sealed.

5. Empty Worship Is Condemned

The lips speak while the heart remains far away.

6. Human Pride Is Reversed

The clay is reminded of the Potter.

7. Restoration Comes

The deaf hear, the blind see, the humble rejoice, and the wayward understand.

Key Truth

God's purpose moves from exposing false religion and pride toward restoring true sight, humility, justice, and worship.

LXXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 29 is a warning to religious people.

That is what makes it so serious.

Jerusalem was not:

A pagan city without knowledge of God.

It was:

David's city.

The place of sacrifice.

The center of worship.

Yet God said:

“Woe to Ariel.”

Why?

Because religion had become:

Routine.

The sacrifices continued.

The calendar continued.

The worship continued.

But the heart:

Did not.

That should make every believer ask:

Is my heart where my mouth is?

It is possible to:

Sing.

Pray.

Preach.

Teach.

Attend church.

Read Scripture.

And still allow the heart to drift:

Far from God.

Isaiah also warns us about:

Spiritual blindness.

The people had:

Revelation.

Yet it functioned like:

A sealed book.

That can still happen.

A Bible can be:

Open on the table.

While the heart remains:

Closed.

Then comes the question of:

Secret sin.

People say:

“Who sees us? Who will know?”

God’s answer is:

I do.

No:

Browser history.

Closed door.

Dark room.

Private conversation.

Hidden plan.

Is hidden from:

The Lord.

Then Isaiah asks:

Can clay tell the Potter:

You did not make me?

You do not understand?

Humanity still does this whenever we tell the Creator:

His standards are wrong.

His wisdom is outdated.

His authority is unnecessary.

The creature does not become wiser than:

The Creator.

But the chapter does not end with:

Blindness.

It ends with:

Sight.

The deaf:

Hear.

The blind:

See.

The humble:

Rejoice.

The needy:

Find joy.

Mockers:

Disappear.

Justice:

Returns.

Jacob's:

Shame is removed.

The wayward:

Understand.

Those who once complained:

Become teachable.

That is hope.

God can transform:

Religious routine.

Into real worship.

Spiritual blindness.

Into sight.

Complaint.

Into instruction.

Shame.

Into holiness.

Therefore:

Bring your heart back to your worship.

Open yourself to God's Word.

Do not hide what God already sees.

Let the Potter be:

The Potter.

Reject empty religion.

Seek true understanding.

Protect justice.

Walk humbly.

And remember:

God is still able to perform:

“A marvelous work.”

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Search our hearts.

Do not let our worship become:

Empty.

Mechanical.

Traditional only.

Forgive us when we honor You with:

Our lips.

While our hearts wander far away.

Bring our hearts:

Back.

Father, give us:

Eyes to see.

Ears to hear.

Hearts to understand.

Do not let Your Word become like:

A sealed book.

Open our minds to:

Truth.

Open our hearts to:

Obedience.

Father, forgive us for secret sins.

Nothing is hidden from You.

Give us courage to bring everything into:

Your light.

Forgive us when we act like:

Clay correcting the Potter.

Teach us humility before:

Our Creator.

Father, perform Your marvelous work among us.

Bring human pride:

Low.

Restore spiritual sight.

Make barren places:

Fruitful.

Let the humble:

Rejoice.

Let the needy:

Find hope.

Defend those falsely accused.

Expose corrupt testimony.

Protect the innocent.

Father, remove shame from Your redeemed people.

Help the next generation see:

The work of Your hands.

Teach them to honor Your name.

Make those who are:

Wayward.

Understand.

Make those who complain:

Teachable.

And may our worship no longer be:

Only words.

But:

Heart.

Truth.

Obedience.

Reverence.

Love.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of human rules taught by men.” — Isaiah 29:13

Central Truth

God exposes religious ritual without heartfelt devotion, humbles Jerusalem and the nations that oppose her, judges spiritual blindness, secret rebellion, human pride, and corrupt justice, yet He also performs a marvelous work that restores hearing, sight, humility, understanding, reverence, justice, and true worship among His redeemed people.

Isaiah 29 in One Sentence

Isaiah warns Jerusalem that religious routine without heart devotion will bring humbling and spiritual blindness, declares that God will suddenly defeat Zion's enemies, condemns empty worship and hidden rebellion, reminds the clay that it cannot overrule the Potter, and promises a marvelous restoration in which the deaf hear, the blind see, the humble rejoice, Jacob's shame disappears, and the wayward learn truth.