

Topic/Subject: God's Judgement is so Sudden and Terrifying it's like a Dream!

Scripture: Isaiah 29: 1 – 12

Reference Scripture: 2 Kings 18 – 19, Isaiah 36 - 37

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### **Biblical Focus/Introduction:**

This chapter contains a prophecy regarding the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem by the Romans. It addresses a potential solution to the current situation with Sennacherib, discusses the character and condition of the Jews, highlights the call of the Gentiles through the preaching of the Gospel, predicts the ruin of the antichrist, and anticipates the conversion of the Jews in the latter days.

The siege and destruction of Jerusalem are described in Isaiah 29:1. The prediction of their enemies' disappointment, despite their success in capturing and destroying the city (including Sennacherib), is outlined in Isaiah 29:9. It points to the stupidity, judicial blindness, and hardness of the Jewish leaders, which ultimately led to their downfall.

The ignorance of both learned and unlearned men regarding the Scriptures and prophecies is critiqued, alongside their hypocrisy and formalism in worship, as stated in Isaiah 29:13. This verse serves as a rebuke to their wisdom and prudence, revealing the folly and atheism of those who believed they were wiser than the Lord (Isaiah 29:14).

There is also a significant transformation expected in Judea and the Gentile world, marked by the shift of the Gospel from one group to another. This change will lead to the enlightenment of darkened minds, as sinners hear the word, and joy increases among the meek and poor. For those in Jerusalem, the aftermath of Sennacherib's defeat will seem like a dream, highlighting the stark contrast between their expectations and reality.

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## **The Lesson:**

### **Verse 1**

Ariel refers to "the Lion of God," which was called that because the fire was laid upon it in the form of a lion, but rather because it devoured the sacrifices laid upon it, as a lion does its prey. It is better to understand it as the city in which David encamped or besieged and took from the Jebusites and fortified and dwelled in the city. From its strength and fortifications, both natural and artificial, and from it being the chief city of Judah, it was called the Lion (Genesis 49:9).

Year after year, in their security and vain confidence, they kept their yearly feast and offered year-round sacrifices. Let the people bring them, and the priest offers them, for the time is coming when an end will be put to them, and the feast will cease.

### **Verse 2**

Ignoring the yearly sacrifices and their observance of the solemn feast and other ceremonies of the law, in which they placed their confidence and neglected weightier matters. Because of the siege and by reasons of the devastation of the enemy, all the cities and towns in Judea would endure sorrow because of the famine and bloodshed in and around the city. The whole city will be as an altar. Just as the alter is covered with the blood and carcasses of the slain animals, so will Jerusalem be covered with the blood and bodies of men.

### **Verse 3**

God will do what the Jerusalem enemies could not because it was God's will, and he will succeed and prosper. Thus, this prophecy is more devastating because it is going to happen. God is going to raise armies to shoot their arrows into the city from outside of their walls. *Note: this does not point to the siege by Sennacherib (who was encamped round Jerusalem at the time) because he did not attack the city, but it points to the siege by the Romans, who had the army battering rams to lay siege to Jerusalem.*

**Verse 4**

This verse depicts Jerusalem as a defeated nation, lying in the dust and unable to speak. However, the allusion to a "ghost" must not blind us to the fact that the scene is also one of repentance, preparing for the sudden upturn in Jerusalem's fortune described in verses 5 - 8. (2 Kings 18:14)

**Verse 5**

This is how, by faith, disaster, and humiliation are transformed by God into victory "for my own sake" and for the sake of my Servant David (Isiah 37:35). The sudden appearance of the Lord of hosts amid thunder, earthquake, whirlwind, and consuming fire, recall his appearances to the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19), to Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 19: 9-12), and the Psalmist in the Temple (Psalm 18:7-15), rather than to human enemies like Sennacherib and the Assyrians. Such a statement could be applied to the onslaught of a plague or a sudden storm.

**Verse 6**

Verse 6 ultimately transcends the realm of historical reality and takes us to the world of Psalm 48

When the kings have joined forces when they have advanced together,

They saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror.

Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor.

You destroyed them like ships of Tarshis shattered by an east wind.

As we have heard, we have seen in the city of the Lord Almighty in the city of our God; God makes us secure forever. (Psalm 48:4-9)

These are imaginative expressions of faith in God, of which Jerusalem, the city of God, is a symbol.

**Verse 7**

Verse 7 develops the scene of the faithful city withstanding all attacks from the forces of evil ranged against her. The image of "a dream, a vision of the night" needs little comment; when the siege is over, and peace is restored, the people of

Jerusalem will find it hard to believe that an immense multitude of foreign nations had ever surrounded them.

### **Verse 8**

Verse 8 elaborates on the image in another direction from the point of view of the enemy's frustrated ambitions; victory had seemed so easy before the battle that they had come to imagine that the wealth of Jerusalem was already theirs. Defeat means the end of their glorious plans. It is like waking up to the harsh reality after a beautiful dream. So shall it be with all who fight against God's people.

### **Verse 9- 12**

Like the first eight verses of the chapter, verses 9-24 comprise a prophecy in two parts. The first comprises three short prophecies of judgment, probably from the years leading up to 701 BC, and the second is a fine prophecy of salvation reminiscent of part of the "Isaiah apocalypse" (Chapter 24-27). The pattern of sin-judgment-hope recurs throughout the book, as it does in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and elsewhere, strengthened by each catastrophic event that fell on the biblical writers. Whether this way of thinking goes back to Isaiah himself, we do not know because his mission was to say to the people of God, "Hear and hear, but do not understand, see and see, but do not perceive: (Isaiah 6:9-10) and not to offer them hope of forgiveness.

The present example of how Isaiah carried out that mission is very closely related to the vision in the Temple (6:1-13). The three prophecies have the same subject: the blindness and lack of understanding of Judah's leaders. First, their blind folly (perhaps referring to their ill-fated negotiations with Egypt that led to Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B.C.) is so inexplicable and so catastrophic that it must be due to divine interventions (v9-10). They are behaving as if they are in a drunken stupor, as though God has put them to sleep so that they cannot see or understand the visions. However, the traditional view is that the text attacks the blindness of the false prophets, especially when verses 11-12 are considered. Their prophetic omniscience, says he with heavy irony, is wasted on them. They are too

drunk or stupid to know what to do when they receive a vision. Their plight is comparable to that of their drunken counterparts in Chapter 28.

## **Conclusion**

Like many of Isaiah's prophecies, they point to their current situation and at the same time points to an even in the future. Having the ability to look back, we can see that God deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib for His sake and David his servant (2 King 19:34). But in the future, we see that the Romans siege and control Jerusalem in 63 BC.

Romans 10:7 reminds us that "Faith Comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Revelations 1:3 states "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take it to heart."