

Is. 28:12 He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.

We will find in chapter 30 that the southern kingdom, in disobedience to God's message through Isaiah, formed an alliance with Egypt. Had they obeyed Isaiah's words they would have experienced God's *rest* as well as deliverance from Assyria.

Is. 28:13 So the word of the Lord to them will be, "Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there," That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive.

God's judgment would be this: His word would become like a series of small, insignificant commandments (to the disobedient) which turn into countless sufferings. Therefore, the people would *be broken, snared, and taken captive*. They were taken captive by the Babylonians in three waves, the first in 606 BC, the second in 597 BC, and the final wave in 586 BC, the year that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Is. 28:14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,

Beginning with this verse, Isaiah addresses the covenant that the leaders of the Jews will enter into with the Antichrist (read verse 15), the covenant which ushers in the Tribulation, the Tribulation spanning seven years. (Note from verse 22 that the destruction that results from this covenant pertains to the whole world, not just the southern kingdom of Judah. Therefore, this covenant has to do with end time events, not events relating to Isaiah's day.)

It is the unwise leadership of the nation (v.14) that will be responsible for such a covenant. These leaders were discussed in Isaiah 3, where we found them to be men who will lack the integrity to lead properly even within their homes. Note from Daniel 9:27 that it is *the many* of the nation who will enter into this *covenant* and not the entire nation. Zechariah 13:8 seems to indicate that *two-thirds* of the Jews will participate. Halfway through the Tribulation the Antichrist will breach the *covenant* and greatly persecute the Jews (Daniel 9:27). It is obvious that just as the covenant with Egypt in Isaiah's day brought much grief to the nation, the covenant with the Antichrist will do so as well, only to a much greater degree.

Is. 28:15 Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception."

The *covenant* with the Antichrist will be signed by the leadership of Israel for security purposes only. In fact, they will view it as a safeguard against future military invasions. From God's point of view, however, it is *a covenant with death*. Those Jews who enter into this *covenant* with the Antichrist will not accept him as Messiah, but as stated earlier, will sign it for security purposes only.

Is. 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

The remnant that does not sign the covenant with the Antichrist (note in Daniel 9:27 the phrase, "*the many*"—it does not say "all") will have opportunity to put their trust in the *cornerstone*, Jesus Christ (Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6-8).

The word "*disturbed*" can also be rendered "in a hurry," or "excited," or "alarmed." Therefore, those who believe in Jesus have the capability of living life in such a way so as not to be in a hurry. In other words, they can enter the *rest* addressed in Hebrews 4:8-11. This verse in Isaiah, or at least a portion of this verse, is quoted in the following places: Romans 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6.

Is. 28:17 "And I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the level; Then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, And the waters shall overflow the secret place.

The covenant with the Antichrist will bring destruction upon the people (also read Daniel 9:27). What is described here is the military invasions that will come against the Jews during the second half of the Tribulation.

Is. 28:18 "And your covenant with death shall be canceled, And your pact with Sheol shall not stand; When the overwhelming scourge passes through, Then you become its trampling place.

The Antichrist will break the *covenant* with the Jews (also read Daniel 9:27) and attempt to overwhelm and trample them. Note again that God makes reference to the *covenant* with the Antichrist as a *covenant with death*. Consequently, the *covenant* will ultimately bring anything but freedom from military attack; for the Antichrist will attack the Jews throughout the second half of the Tribulation, especially during The Campaign of Armageddon (addressed in much detail in the notes associated with Isaiah 13:3). Isn't it interesting that any agreement with the powers of darkness, regardless of what segment of history one may experience, always results in tragedy?

Is. 28:19 "As often as it passes through, it will seize you. For morning after morning it will pass through, anytime during the day or night. And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means."

Instead of the covenant with the Antichrist bringing security, it will bring insecurity; for the Jews will be invaded by the Antichrist and his armies. *Terror* will seize the Jews who have entered into the covenant once they understand their mistake.

Is. 28:20 The bed is too short on which to stretch out, And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in.

Rest will abandon the nonremnant of the Jews as a result of the actions of the Antichrist (there are few things less comfortable than sleeping in a *bed* that is too short with a *blanket* that does not sufficiently cover the body).

Is. 28:21 For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon; To do His task, His unusual task, And to work His work, His extraordinary work.

This verse speaks of God's wrath that will be displayed toward the Jews for their entering into the covenant with the Antichrist. David defeated the Philistines *at Mount Perazim* (2 Samuel 5:17-21; 1 Chronicles 14:8-12) and a second time in *the valley of Gibeon* (1 Chronicles 14:13-16). Joshua also defeated the Canaanites in *Gibeon* (Joshua 10:6-15), an extraordinary work indeed when you consider that God caused *the sun* to stand *still...for about a whole day* at Joshua's request. Note that the Tribulation is called "*His unusual task*" and "*His extraordinary work*." It is *unusual* and *extraordinary* in that the Tribulation is a judgment that comes upon the whole

world, as verse 22 confirms, one of its main purposes being to bring the Jews to repentance (Daniel 9:24).

Is. 28:22 And now do not carry on as scoffers, Lest your fetters be made stronger; For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, Of decisive destruction on all the earth.

Due to God's decree that is issued when the Jews enter into the covenant with the Antichrist, the entire world will be devastated during the Tribulation.

Is. 28:23 ¶ Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my words.

God calls His people to *hear His voice* as He speaks two parables in verses 23-29, parables that explain the need for the judgment which is to follow. These parables confirm that God shows mercy toward His people in the midst of His judgments.

Is. 28:24 Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed? Does he continually turn and harrow the ground?

The first parable has to do with the preparation of the ground previous to the planting of the *seed*. The *farmer* does not *plow continually*. He plows only for a specified time before the planting begins.

Is. 28:25 Does he not level its surface, And sow dill and scatter cummin, And plant wheat in rows, Barley in its place, and rye within its area?

As was the case in verse 24, sowing and planting follow the painful process of plowing.

Is. 28:26 For his God instructs and teaches him properly.

Only as the Jews experience God's plowing will they be prepared for God's sowing.

Is. 28:27 For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.

Different types of seeds need different degrees of *threshing*.

Is. 28:28 Grain for bread is crushed, Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it, He does not thresh it longer.

Even though threshing is essential, it eventually ceases.

Is. 28:29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.

God, who possesses *wonderful counsel and...great wisdom*, knows the degree to which His people need to be threshed. Therefore, it will not be too much or too little. Notice the similarities between what Isaiah records here and what he stated in Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah 29

Is. 29:1 Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped! Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.

Ariel is Jerusalem, *the city where David once camped* (2 Samuel 5:6-10). *Ariel* means “Lion of God” (2 Samuel 23:20; 1 Chronicles 11:22). It also means “*hearth* of God” or “burning of God” (Isaiah 29:2; Ezekiel 43:15 and 16). Isaiah will use both definitions in this book, for he prophesies that Jerusalem will be brought low only to rebound to experience Gods’ blessings (and overpower like a lion).

Is. 29:2 And I will bring distress to Ariel, And she shall be a city of lamenting and mourning; And she shall be like an Ariel to me.

God would *bring distress to Ariel* (Jerusalem), and she would *be like an Ariel*, or “hearth” (“burning”). Therefore, even though Jerusalem observed her *feasts* (v.1), she continued to sin. Consequently, the *city* would be turned into a hearth—a place where the citizens will find themselves *lamenting and mourning* (v.2).

Is. 29:3 And I will camp against you encircling you, And I will set siegeworks against you, And I will raise up battle towers against you.

The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (in 586 BC) is evidently addressed here.

Is. 29:4 Then you shall be brought low; From the earth you shall speak, And from the dust where you are prostrate, Your words shall come. Your voice shall also be like that of a spirit from the ground, And your speech shall whisper from the dust.

Jerusalem will *be brought low* and *speak* with a voice like a demon *from the dust* of the earth—which sounds like whispering and muttering (also read Isaiah 8:19). Note: Jerusalem was *brought low* in 586 BC by the Babylonians when they burned the city as well as the temple. Jerusalem will also be *brought low* (overthrown) by the Antichrist during the middle of the Tribulation.

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

God will *suddenly* punish Jerusalem's *enemies* and they will *become like fine dust and chaff which blows away*. This is speaking of the destruction of the Antichrist and his armies from throughout the world at the Second Coming of Christ, for in verse 7 we see the word “*nations*.”

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.

Ariel's enemies will be judged by means of *thunder, earthquake, loud noise, whirlwind, tempest, and the flame of a consuming fire*. The *consuming fire* may point to the Shechinah *glory* that will be manifested at the Christ's Second Coming (Matthew 24:29-30). Note that *water* is not the resource used to bring such judgment, meaning that God will remain faithful to His promise of Genesis 9:11.

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, Shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.

Jerusalem's (Ariel's) enemies (the Gentile *nations*) will be consumed so quickly at Christ's Second Coming that it will seem as though they were *a dream, a vision of the night*.

Is. 29:8 And 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 shall be, Who wage war against Mount Zion.

The Gentile *nations...Who wage war against Jerusalem* will not succeed. Zechariah 12:2-4 and Zechariah 14:2-3 both confirm that the *nations* which attack and overtake *Jerusalem* at the end of the Tribulation will be swiftly destroyed. They will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus (Revelation 19:11-16).

Is. 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, in verses 9-12, deals with the basis for the difficulty in the land. In forsaking the Lord, the leaders of the nation had lost their ability to lead. They were *blind,...drunk, but not with wine*, causing them to *stagger, but not with strong drink*.

Is. 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.

Due to their sin, the Lord had made the false *prophets* and *seers* (who tried to lead) numb to the things of the Spirit.

Is. 29:11 And the entire vision shall 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."

God had taken away the leaders' ability to understand the truth of the Scriptures. Consequently, Isaiah's words were meaningless to them, as a *book* that had been *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."

Due to disobedience, the Scriptures were closed to not only the literate in the land, but to the *illiterate* as well.

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,

There was much dead religion practiced among the Jews of Isaiah's day, meaning they possessed no spiritual life. Because the leaders were unable to properly teach the Scriptures, the people only gave *lip service* to the things of God (they "looked" spiritual but possessed no inward spiritual life). Jesus dealt with a similar issue during His First Coming in Matthew 15:1-9 and Mark 7:1-7. In fact, the rejection of Jesus during His earthy ministry resulted from the Pharisees living by tradition (the commandments of men) rather than the word of God. This rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus led to the dispersion of the Jews in A.D. 70 (which continues today) and will eventually lead to the signing of the covenant with the Antichrist, followed by the Tribulation (discussed in chapter 28). Consequently, the Orthodox Jew of our day looks very religious due to his observance of commandments of men that were communicated in oral form during Jesus' earthy ministry. They were later written down (around 220 AD) and are known today as the Mishnah. The fact that the Orthodox Jews of today are overly influenced by human commandments has caused them to be insensitive to the word of God. How else can their rejection of the Messiahship of Christ be explained when so much proof is available for to all who approaches the Scriptures honestly, openly, and literally? The following quote from the Mishnah (the traditions of men, which were oral commands during Jesus' earthy ministry but written down later around 220 AD) confirms that the Orthodox Jew views these traditions as carrying more authority than the word of God:

Greater stringency applies to [the observance of] the words of the Scribes than to [the observance of] the words of the [written] Law (The Mishnah; Danby; Fourth Division, Nezikin; Sanhedrin, 11.3; page 400).

This mindset will continue until the remnant of Jews at the end of the Tribulation realize their error and renounce Orthodox Judaism. It is then that they will adhere to a literal and contextual view of the Scriptures and accept Jesus as the Messiah. (The notes associated with Isaiah 52:13 tie in well here.)