

## INTRODUCTION

People of God, the Lord writes his judgments on the pages of history with a Magnum .44 fatty permanent marker. But idolatry and hypocrisy makes us spiritually blind so that we cannot read what God clearly writes, even if it is in big black bold capital letters scrawled out by his own hand on the wall in front of our eyes.

The message that God writes is clear. Judgment begins with the household of God. The Lord will not tolerate idolatry or hypocrisy from his people. But Woe to those that God uses to Judge His people for their idolatry and hypocrisy.

The historical process by which God moves history forward and brings his people from glory to glory is through death and resurrection. This death can either be self inflicted, that is, the people “kill” themselves through continual repentance, or God inflicts death and judgment upon his people for them refusing to repent. Either way, God is going to get his people to repent one way or the other. Because God’s intentions toward his people are for good. The Lord is making the church into a fit Bride for His Son. And we must be washed clean by the water of the word, and sometimes God has to scrub really hard.

This is the lesson we see time and time again throughout Scripture. God’s people sin and forsake His ways. The prophets call for repentance. If they don’t repent, God sends some foreign nation to attack His people to make their situation so bad that they are forced to call upon God and repent. God then hears their cry, and he delivers them. This is the story of Israel, and we see it clearly early on in the book of Judges, and this same process continues throughout the times of the Kings.

The point is that God always preserves His people through Judgment. Death turns into resurrection. Again, either self inflicted death through repentance, or God inflicted death through judgment. Either way,

Judgment for God's people is God's historical mechanism where he brings life from the dead, and preserves His kingdom from age to age. The Bible can be interpreted as a string of victories cleverly disguised as disasters.

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## OVERVIEW

Now Isaiah, as he often does in his prophecy, switches back and forth from passages about judgment to passages about salvation. And sometimes it can get quite dizzying and confusing trying to figure out who he is talking about. So let me give you a quick overview of what is going on in Isaiah 29.

In verses 1-4 he speaks to Jerusalem and tells her that she is going to be judged and brought low by a siege. We know from other places that this sieging nation is Assyria.

In verse 5-8 he speaks to Assyria who brings the judgment and promises that they will not succeed.

In verses 9-14 he comes back to speak to Jerusalem and here he gives the reason why He sent his judgment upon Jerusalem in the first place.

In verses 15-16 God mocks those who think they are wiser than God.

Verses 17-21 speaks of the deliverance that God promises his people, complete with the destruction of their enemies.

And verses 22-24 then show a new beginning like that of Abraham being called out of Ur.

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## ASSYRIAN ATTACK AGAINST ARIEL

Isaiah 29 begins with a prophecy about a siege against Jerusalem by the Assyrian Army. Isaiah 37 tells us of this siege of Mount Zion by

Sennacharib, King of Assyria. He surrounded the city with his army to destroy it, but the siege was stopped when King Hezekiah prayed for God to save them. The Angel of the Lord intervened and killed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night. When Sennacharib awoke in the morning, his army was dead. Because it is difficult to lay siege to a city without an army, Sennacharib went back home to Assyria. After he got home, he was murdered while worshiping in the temple of his false god. This is the great deliverance spoken of in verses 5-8.

Now although this is the historical context of Isaiah 29, vss 7 and 8 tell us that this same principle extends out further to all nations and peoples who rise against the city of God to destroy it. God will deliver his people from *all* the nations that fight against City of God.

In v. 8 God says that the desire of the multitude of nations to have victory over Mt. Zion will not be satisfied. He says it will be like one who dreams he is eating only to wake up and his hunger is not satisfied. Like one dreams he is drinking, only to wake up and his thirst is not quenched. All the hopes and dreams of ruling the world and destroying the church to do it, will always amount to nothing. So shall all the multitude of the nations be that fight against Mount Zion.

Just like how United States feels right now, that the war in Afghanistan was completely pointless, so too will the enemies of God's people feel the same way after fighting relentlessly against God's people, and never defeating them. As soon as the Taliban began killing Christians in Afghanistan in order to establish their rule, they really just defeated themselves. All their attempts at establishing an Islamic Kingdom around the world will not be satisfied. How do I know? First of all because they don't pay homage to Christ as God. And second, they kill his Bride. The Lord will not allow their plans for world domination to succeed. Christ has his own plans for world domination, and its foundations are laid through blood of the saints.

God writes this truth over and over again on every page of history, with every new rising kingdom or nation, with each new successive totalitarian regime who seeks to rule the world, and fight against the church. And yet, the result is the same every time. The nations are like the waves crashing against the rocks. But God's kingdom is the rock that fills the whole world.

And no matter how big the waves get, no matter how much the sea roars and foams, no matter how violent the tempest swirls about, the Rock of God's kingdom will remain forever. And that is because Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, possesses the power of an indestructible life, and he lives in Heaven, unscathed from death.

And so you see, the Church of Christ can never be defeated. Because if someone wanted to finally defeat the church they would have to kill Jesus. But good luck with that. Someone already tried, and he rose from the dead. And so now he has the keys to death and hades.

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## BLINDNESS OF IDOLATRY

And this is what we need to understand today to make sense of our time in which we live. If we are going to read the script of God's writing clearly on this page of history in which we find ourselves, then we need to come to grips with what is happening before our eyes.

The first thing we need to understand is this – idolatry makes people stupid. Idols cannot hear and cannot see, and so people who worship them become just like them. God makes those people who should be gifted with discernment, those people who should be wise and be able to perceive what is going on in history, just like the idols they worship. God gives them over to a spirit of stupor and spiritual drunkenness and

blindness. And the only way to get their attention is if God does something to astonish them and shock them out of their stupor.

Thus he says, in vss 9-12

*Astonish yourselves and be astonished;  
blind yourselves and be blind!  
Be drunk, but not with wine;  
stagger, but not with strong drink!  
<sup>10</sup> For the LORD has poured out upon you  
a spirit of deep sleep,  
and has closed your eyes (the prophets),  
and covered your heads (the seers).*

<sup>11</sup> *And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." <sup>12</sup> And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."*

Thus what we are seeing today is that both the educated (those who can read) and the uneducated (those who cannot read) have no insight. The Elite and the commoner have both been afflicted with a spiritual blindness. We have become a nation of drunken idiots tottering about, groping and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth, despite the fact it was right in front of our faces the whole time.

All the supposed experts' knowledge is being turned on its head, all the predictions of the self-professed wise are proven false, all the remedies of the doctors only make sicknesses worse, all the attempts of peace only create war. God is turning the world's leaders and their wisdom against them, showing them to be utter fools. Sleepy Joe Biden is a judgment from God. Anthony Fauci is a judgment from God. The CDC is a judgment from God. All of the worlds leaders who are proving themselves

to be absolutely incapable of doing anything correctly, is judgment from God. There is total incompetence everywhere because of God's judgment on our idolatry and hypocrisy.

Even the leaders in the church, the prophets and seers, are tripping over themselves in a drunken stupor in order to embrace and teach the latest heresy. Pastors and teachers and theologians who just 6 years ago we thought were pretty good, have now proven themselves to be totally and utterly blind. If there were ever a time to say to these people, "Go home you're drunk, it would be now."

But we need not be alarmed. When God brings times of crisis and judgment upon his people, we can know that God is getting ready to deliver His people. When the times get insane, and it seems like a Spiritual drunkenness and outright blindness comes upon the people, we can be prepared for God to do something big, and deliver his people.

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## HYPOCRISY

But before we get there, we need to understand why judgment has come upon His people in the first place. So, then in verses 13-14 God tells us exactly what the problem is, and why he sent Assyria to judge Jerusalem. And the reason is not only idolatry but also hypocrisy.

*"Inasmuch as this people draw near with their mouths  
And honor Me with their lips,  
But have removed their hearts far from Me,  
And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,*

Here I would like to point **two specific** things. First, God considers the that it is totally unacceptable for his people to gather to worship him and their hearts not be engaged in the worship. God cares very little about lip

service, but seeks the whole of your heart. Now that of course does not mean that God doesn't want to hear the praise of your lips. He most certainly does, as well as the praise of your heart. But the only thing worse than approaching God in worship with only your lips and not your heart, is to approach him and not even give him your lips at all.

Coming into a worship service in which the God of all creation, the God of your salvation calls you to serve Him, and you don't even go through the motions is way worse than just praising him with your lips. Refusing to sing his praises, not confessing your sins, not reciting the creed, not saying the prayers outloud, not lifting up your hands, not listening to the sermon because you are too busy joking and laughing with the person next to you,– all of these things God finds even more offensive to him than mere lip service.

At least with lip service God is receiving at least some kind of worship. Psalm 50:23 says, *Whoever offers praise glorifies me, says the Lord*. But when folks show up and don't even offer the praise of lip, and don't follow along in the liturgy and don't participate and don't sing or pray or say the creed, but only fill their time with idle talk, or keep their arms folded or their lips sealed, God isn't getting anything, except angry.

Now consider, People of God, if God doesn't tolerate mere lip service, how much less is he going to tolerate downright disrespect and disobedience when we refuse to even offer him our lips?

I know some of you boast in me as your pastor, and talk me up. Maybe the Lord is using me to bring the word, but if you are not obeying the word and giving God your heart and soul and voice, then all you are doing making yourselves guilty of hypocrisy.

Ezekiel speaks of this problem in his own day. The Lord says, <sup>30</sup> *"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his*

brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' That is they are all saying, hey, let go hear Ezekiel preach, lets hear the word of God spoken from his lips. <sup>31</sup> So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, **but they do not do them**; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.

People of God, if we want God to restore us and to lift his hand of judgment from off of us, we need to stop playing around when we come into God's presence. Let him who boast, boast in the Lord.

We are being called out of the world and into the presence of The Most High God, and the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him (2 Chron. 16:9). The question we need to ask ourselves is, Does God find your heart loyal to him when you come before him today? Are you worshiping the Lord in spirit and truth, with lips, and heart, and hands, and body, and soul, and voice? We need to be fully engaged in what we are doing when we come into His presence, for if we don't come into his presence rightly, God will not receive our prayers and our praise, for we will ascend to him as a foul stench in his nostrils, and as something lukewarm that he will spew out of his mouth. And that is something that neither we nor our children or grandchildren cannot afford.

The second issue is that of false doctrine. *For their fear toward me is taught by the commandments of men*, God says. In our days there is so much false teaching, heresy, and general lack of knowledge of true doctrine, or how to interpret the scriptures, that God's people are being led astray in droves. These shepherds are wolves who devour the sheep, and who wither with health, wealth, and prosperity nonsense, or wokism, or feminism, or sexual issues, and everything else.

The church has become a laughing stock before the watching world, nd an abomination before the eyes of God. There is so much evil and lies



and wickedness that is being taught by these priests and pastors that it is practically unthinkable. They don't believe in the authority of the Scriptures that they preach from. They offer worldly wisdom and teach people that is good and right to commit sexual immorality, to abort babies, to sow strife and hatred between peoples based on race, all while they corrupt the natural godly order of the home. They have become prophets of Satan, and the churches have become synagogues of Satan.

Malachi 2 speaks of this quite well.

*<sup>7</sup>“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,  
And people should seek the law from his mouth;  
For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*

*<sup>8</sup>But you have departed from the way;  
You have caused many to stumble at the law.  
You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.*

*<sup>9</sup>“Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base  
Before all the people,  
Because you have not kept My ways  
But have shown partiality in the law.”*

These Pastors and Priests are not just ignorant of the basics of the law of God, but they also assume that law itself is wrong. They take the modern secular liberal standards of truth and morality and they judge the Law of God and mock the perfect law of liberty. And they think they are cute when they do it. Or they take the Scriptures completely out of context all together and refuse to reinterpret the law through the lens of the coming of Christ and so multiply problems on top of problems, and make the church look stupid and make our God look worse.

And when they do this, they seek to exalt themselves and score points with all the cool liberal kids. “Look at that pastor, he is so cool, he knows

the bible is stupid, look at him make fun of it.” All of this is hypocrisy people of God. Pretending to be something other than what you really are.

Now, it is precisely because God’s people are hypocrites that wisdom is in short supply these days. Because of idolatry and hypocrisy, God brings judgment. And the only way to escape God’s judgment and get God to act on our behalf and deliver us from this plague of blindness and spiritual drunkenness is to repent. And we need to call out to God to save us and trust him that he will, and we need to obey where we have been disobedient. And He will deliver us.

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## DELIVERANCE

This brings us to v. 14:

*<sup>14</sup>Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work*

*Among this people,*

*A marvelous work and a wonder;*

*For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,*

*And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”*

Despite the fact that God send his judgments of stupidity and drunkenness and ignorance upon the people, God will intervene and act and do a marvelous work. His wondrous work will bring about the perishing of the wisdom of the “wise.” This passage is later interpreted by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians to refer to the marvelous work of the crucifixion of Christ which thwarted the wisdom of the devils who thought they could kill the Messiah of God, but in so doing, only participated in their own defeat.

Likewise, God is going to use the attacks of the enemy against his people to defeat his enemy and to bring victory to His people. Just like Christ, our death will turn into resurrection. This is the Deep Magic from Before

Time. This is the wonderful workings of God, and only the truly wise know this.

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## POTTER AND THE CLAY

Isaiah then switches back to talking about the stupidity and foolishness of the people, especially those who conspire against God and His anointed in v. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD,  
And their works are in the dark;  
They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"*

<sup>16</sup> *Surely you have things turned around!  
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;  
For shall the thing made say of him who made it,  
"He did not make me"?  
Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it,  
"He has no understanding"?*

Man in his "wisdom" thinks he can plot in secret against God and his ways, and that God does not know about it. They honestly think they can "get away" with it. But they emerge from the council chambers thinking they have wisdom and knowledge but instead they produce perversity and get things completely turned around. They turn things upside down, Isaiah says. They call boys girls, they say war is peace, slavery is freedom, love is hate. Evil is tolerance. The healthy are sick. Everything that the worldly wise think of, is 100% backwards.

Isaiah says that they are like the clay that a potter uses and yet the clay thinks itself wise enough to tell the potter what to do. They think they can deny that the Creator has made them and the world in such a way as he did, or insist that God has no understanding and they can reject all that and somehow still prosper and maintain control.

What these last passages tell us is that the destiny of everyone is wrapped up in how they use their lips and talk back to God. You either draw near to God with your lips and your heart in spirit and truth. Or you draw away from God with your lips and your heart, in backwardness and disobedience. One recognizes who God is, and the other forgets that God is the Creator and Maker.

And this blindness leads to ethical relativism – where everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Which is the culmination of God's judgment in the world. When Gods give you over to your own depraved and debased mind, to do whatever you think is good and right, and so that you obey the lusts and passions of your own heart, you have been judged.

The fundamental error of all human centered philosophies is that they cannot admit of a transcendent God whose laws and rules are higher and more permanent than our own thoughts and the whims of our own emotions.

And yet the very same people who have been given over to drunkenness and a stupor and whose hearts are blind and who have no understanding, continue in their rebellion insist that God is the one who has no understanding, because their own thoughts and emotions hold more authority than the God who made them.

A people who assume their wisdom and understanding is higher than that of God's is a recipe for destruction.

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## TRANSFORMATION

But destruction is not the end of the story, vss 17-19 God promises to open the eyes of the blind and give ears to the deaf so they can hear the words of the book (that was sealed to them in their drunken stupor) and see.

<sup>17</sup> *Is it not yet a very little while  
Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,  
And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?*

<sup>18</sup> *In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book,  
And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*

<sup>19</sup> *The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,  
And the poor among men shall rejoice  
In the Holy One of Israel.*

In only a short while God will bring about the great transformation that his wonder was intended to produce. In other words, the change will be dramatic, and a reversal of the way things are in the world.

Isaiah imagines the transformation will be like the forest of Lebanon turning into a field, and a field turning into a forest. This of course is just another way of saying that the hills will be laid low, and the valleys will be exalted. It speaks of a reversal of the way things are. The Proud will be humbled, and the humble will be exalted. The mighty of the world will fall, but the meek and lowly of God's common people will flourish. The wise will become fools and the fools in the sight of the world will be reckoned as wise. And the meek shall inherit the earth.

Then the blind will see and be able to read the book of God's judgments in the world. They will see the light. V. 20:

<sup>20</sup> *For the ruthless shall come to nothing,  
And the scoffer cease,  
And all who watch to do evil shall be cut off—*

Those who oppress the people of God, the ruthless and the scoffer, these are the one who are in contempt of the truth. We might categorize them today as the Politicians and comedians – the ruthless are politicians who

ruthlessly pursue power, and the scoffers are those comedians and late night show comics who only condemn and criticize. These kinds of people are corrosive to the common life of the people, because they have to break down all social bonds, destroy all trust, corrupt all language, erase all boundaries, legislate lawlessness and promote evil, and mock the good, the true, the beautiful. But they are the ones who are going to be removed when God restores His people.

These last villains demonstrate their evil in a way that is familiar to us today. V. 21:

<sup>21</sup> *Who make a man an offender by a word,  
And lay a snare for him who reproveth in the gate,  
And turn aside the just by empty words.*

These villains slander the character of men through words, (ex. racist), thus making him an offender; *they trap the one who reproveth in the gate* – that is, the person who is attempting to maintain true justice and righteousness and good social order is the one who gets arrested. Pastors are being thrown in jail for not shutting down the church. Planned Parenthood sells baby parts and the guy that exposes it get thrown in jail and fined. There are also those who twist and manipulate people's words and use them against them – *he turns aside the just by empty words.*

Our society is run amok with such people like this, but God is going to do such a work that he will reverse the state of affairs so that we shall no longer be ashamed.

And in v. 22-24 we see the hope for the future.

<sup>22</sup> *Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:*

*“Jacob shall not now be ashamed,  
Nor shall his face now grow pale;*

*<sup>23</sup> But when he sees his children,  
The work of My hands, in his midst,  
They will hallow My name,  
And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,  
And fear the God of Israel.*

*<sup>24</sup> These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding,  
And those who complained will learn instruction.”*

God brought Abraham out from Ur of the Chaldees and separated him from the idolaters of his day. And God formed a mighty nation from his children and children's children after him, making him the patriarch of a multitude which belong to the Lord. Likewise, from the great body of the physical nation of Jacob, who have been blinded by hypocrisy and idolatry, God would also redeem the Israel and Judah. And not only them, but also the whole world.

And so Jacob, will no longer suffer shame. Their face will not grow pale, but he will have such a bright future that he will look upon his children and have a restored hope for the future. He will trust in the promised blessings of God's covenant for his children and his children's children and He will bless God's name, and fear God, and worship Him.

God might not save our nation in our lifetime. But we have the hope of God's blessings for our children's children. And so each of us is to be like a new Abraham, a new patriarch and fathers of a new kingdom. We give our children the sacraments, we teach them to fear God, and watch with hopeful eyes into the future.

Even those who were once blind and deaf, and who scoffed, will come to understanding, and learn knowledge.

And now this is the truth which remains written on the pages of history: When God brings times of crisis, God judging his people. But that means

he is also getting ready to rescue his people and wondrously defeat those who persecuted his people. This salvation will happen when God's people repent of their idolatry and hypocrisy and draw near to the throne of Grace with all their hearts, for then they will find mercy and grace to help in a time of need. Amen.