

## Woe #2 & #3—Jerusalem's Distress and Delusion

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Isaiah 29

➤ Isaiah delivers six “woes” in chapters 28-33. Isaiah 29 records “Woe” #2 (v. 1) and #3 (v. 15).

- One “woe” was because Judea acting like God did not see or know what they were doing (vs. 1-15).
- The other “woe” was because they were deluded to think they were getting by with it (vs. 15-24).

### I. The “Woe” of Jerusalem’s DISTRESS (vs. 1-15).

➤ Vs. 1-15 describe God’s heavy judgment coming upon Jerusalem.

#### A. DOWNFALL of “Ariel” (vs. 1-6).

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“Ariel” (v. 1) may mean “lion of God.” It is an idiom for the city of Jerusalem, “*the city where David dwelt.*” Even today there is a periodical published in Jerusalem called “*The ARIEL.*”

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1. Abrupt, sudden. Jerusalem’s distress would come when they did not expect it. They will continue “*year to year*” offering sacrifices, like everything is normal (v. 1). But suddenly God sends the Babylonians who bring Jerusalem down to the ground/dust (vs. 3-4; Jer. 52:4-7; Lam 2:10, 21; 3:29).
2. Christ’s coming will also come when Israel least expects it (Mt. 24:37-44).
  - ◆ v. 6—These judgments will also occur in the tribulation (Rev. 5-19 cf. Nah. 1:2-6).

#### B. DREAM of the adversaries (vs. 7-8).

1. v. 7— Isaiah switches from God’s judgment on Jerusalem to God’s judgment against those who attack Jerusalem. God sometimes uses His enemies to punish His own people. He will judge the Jew first, then judge those who attack the Jews.
  - ◆ In the future all nations that come against Jerusalem will be destroyed by God (Zech. 12:2-3; 14:2-3). They shall vanish like a dream dies at daybreak.

2. v. 8— Judea’s enemy is likened to a hungry and thirsty dreamer who eats and drinks until he is satisfied. Then he wakes up empty and faint. Any nation who “dreams” of destroying God’s people will eventually wake up and realize they were only dreaming!

◆ Isaiah is prophesying about the Assyrian army lead by Sennacherib who boasted they would defeat Jerusalem (Isa. 36:13-20). God said, “If you think you are going to defeat my people, you are dreaming!” God promised to make of Abraham a great nation. God would bless those who blessed His people and curse those who cursed His people. Sennacherib was dreaming if he believed his army could overthrow Jerusalem.

◆ Sure enough, one night while 185,000 Assyrian soldiers encamped against Jerusalem, God sent His angel and killed every last one of them (Isa. 37:36).

◆ There are nations today that believe they will drive Israel into the sea. They are dreaming. It ain’t gonna happen.

Dreams are not reality. When a person believes something that is contrary to God’s Word, they are dreaming.

- If you think you can get to heaven without being “born again,” you are dreaming.
- If you think you can be saved by your good works, you are dreaming.
- If you think you can get to heaven by any other way than by Jesus, you are dreaming.
- If you think you can sin and get away with it, you are dreaming.

C. The DROWSINESS of Jerusalem (vs. 9-10).

- “*Stay yourselves...*” (v. 9). Israel is wobbly and needs to lean on something to hold itself up.

1. Because Judea kept closing their eyes to the “light” God provided, God gave them over to deep sleep (cf. John 12:37-40).
  2. v. 10—God gives them a spiritual “sleeping pill” (cf. Isa. 6:10; Rom. 11:8). Israel would not “see” the truth until God removed the veil upon their eyes (2 Cor. 3:14-16).
- D. The DISREGARD of God’s warning (vs. 9-14). When a man disregards God’s Word (v. 13), God closes the Book on him. A man who has no interest in understanding the Bible or obeying it, God will leave him to walk in darkness.
- ◆ Who “closed” their eyes—God, or did they close their eyes themselves? They cannot “see” because they REFUSED TO SEE (cf. Mt. 13:13-15; Acts 28:23-28).
  - ◆ Example of Pharaoh: 18 times the Bible says Pharaoh’s heart was hardened: Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? God or Pharaoh himself? God foreknew Pharaoh’s heart was already hardened against Israel (cf. 3:19; 8:15; 8:32; 9:34; 1 Sam. 6:6), Therefore, God merely acted on the disposition of Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1; 10:20; 10:27; 11:10; 14:4-8; 14:17).
1. Their problem is not a “head” problem—It is a “heart” problem (v. 13). They were insincere.
  2. Verse 14—*“Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”* God was saying, “I’m going to judge you. The wisdom of your wise men will perish. The understanding of your scholars will be hidden.”

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Paul’s reference in 1 Corinthians 1:19 to Isaiah 29:14 is in the context of Christ’s crucifixion. The Christ “work” on the cross was *“a marvelous work and a wonder.”* But because people rejected Christ, God destroys the wisdom of the wise and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent (cf. Mt. 11:25; Luke 10:21).

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## II. The “Woe” of Jerusalem’s DELUSION (29:15-24).

### A. The CENSURING of their futile deception (vs. 15-16).

1. They were self-deceived to believe they could hide their plans from God (v. 15)—Delusional thinking.

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“Woe” to the person who thinks they can hide their actions from God or that God doesn’t take notice. Foolish! If we were really conscious of God seeing everything we do, maybe we wouldn’t do some of the things we do.

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- Like a good parent, God loves you too much not to notice what you do. He loves you so much He can’t take His eyes off you!
2. v. 16— It is dumb to question why God does what He does [Cf. Rom 9:19-22; Job 33:13.]

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Kindergarten riddle: Where does the gorilla sleep in the forest? Answer: Wherever he wants to! God is God, and He will do whatsoever He is pleased to do (Ps. 115:3).

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- “...shall the work say of him that made it, **He made me not...**” —Man’s denial of God as Creator—“God did not make me!” (Ps. 100:3).
- “...or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, **He had no understanding.**” When you consider the incredible structure of the human body and man’s DNA, how can anyone say God had no understanding when He made a man? No one, but God, can fully understand the amazing workings of the human body! David said, “***I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well***” (Ps. 139:14).

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Many evolutionists teach the ear lobe, tonsils, the appendix, are just “leftovers” from a time when man was an apes. God created man with ear lobes, tonsils, and an appendix for a reason. God understands their purpose even if man doesn’t.

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B. The COMFORTING of their future deliverance (vs. 17-24). In spite of Israel's deluding thinking, God gives Israel something to look forward to—After judgment will come restoration and kingdom blessings.

1. Israel will be **Productive** — A restoration of fruitfulness (v. 17).

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This is the teaching of Christ's parable in Luke 13:6-9. God will allow an unfruitful tree to be *digged* and *dunged* to make it fruitful. "Dung" represents something that is unpleasant and unwanted. God knows there is something in the "*dung*" that a tree needs to make it fruitful. This may happen in the life of an unfruitful Christian. God will allow a trial or distasteful experience to come into his life to produce some good fruit. Have you ever been "dunged?"

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2. Israel will have **Perception** (vs. 18, 24). A restoration of spiritual understanding.
3. Israel will offer **Praise** (vs. 19-21). Praise for justice being restored (vs 20-21).

**SUMMATION** (vs. 22-24): In the kingdom the Jews will no longer be despised, but will be honored by the nations and God will be extolled.

The history of Israel was plagued by errors (Hos. 4:12) and murmuring (Ex. 15:24; 16:2). Their error and murmuring (i.e. complaining that they cannot understand, 28:9; 29:11-12) will be replaced by understanding and learning sound doctrine.