**“Insights Into Isaiah”—Chapters 29-31**

**Chapter 29—the Conversion of Israel**

1. **Who is Ariel?** Where David dwelt.: The name **Ariel** means *Lion of God*, and in this passage is used as a symbolic reference to Jerusalem . **The only place where Ariel is used as a name for Jerusalem is in this chapter of Isaiah**,
   1. **Discuss the name of the priest in Ezra 8:16**. The word only appears one other time in the Old Testament in this place.
   2. **Ariel can mean “an altar.**” **See Ezekiel 43:15-16.**There is some dispute as to if **Ariel** means **Lion of God** (the literal translation) or *an altar for burning*, which is a very similar word in Hebrew (used in passages like [Ezekiel 43:15-16](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ezekiel+43:15-16&t1=en_nas)). If it is to be understood as *an altar for burning*, then the idea is that “The fighting and bloodshed around Jerusalem would make the city like a giant place of sacrifice.” But, considering the context as a whole, it is best to see **Ariel** with its literal meaning - *Lion of God*. Another name for the city of Jerusalem.
   3. **Zechariah 14 echoes this same idiom. Chart the parallel.**
   4. **Can the use of Ariel,”Lion of God,” be a sarcastic reference to Jerusalem?** When we consider the way **Ariel** is used in these verses, and the context as a whole, the idea behind calling Jerusalem *Lion of God* is probably sarcastic. The repetition of the name (four times in two verses), and the context of God’s judgment against Jerusalem, suggest the idea that Jerusalem may have thought of herself as the *Lion of God*, but God didn’t share that lofty opinion of the city. It may be that the people of Jerusalem had taken to calling themselves by the name **Ariel**, to both express and strengthen their confidence.
   5. **Is there a feeling that Jerusalem is proud?** **Examine verse l.**
2. **What does God do to Ariel/Jerusalem?** Distress her with heaviness and sorrow. .Instead of the routine of **year to year** and the **feasts**, God will send **heaviness and sorrow**. If Jerusalem sees itself as a *lion*, then God will fight against them with the same fury a man would have against a lion (**it shall be to Me as Ariel**).
   1. **How does God purge Israel to bring her back to Him?** Sends enemies to afflict her. **See I John 1:5.**
3. **In verse 3, who does God allow to encamp around the Israelites?** The Assyrians for the north, the Babylon in the south.
   1. **Discuss the phrase “be brought down” in verse 4.**
   2. **How does “their speech shall whisper our of the dust” translate to both northern and southern tribes? They will be brought down.**
4. **In verses 5-8, how does the Lord protect and delivers a humbled Jerusalem? The multitude of your foes shall be like fine dust**: The closing image in the previous verses was Jerusalem groveling in the dust. Now, the LORD uses another image, spun off of the idea of **dust** - Jerusalem’s enemies will scattered as **fine dust**. God will humble Jerusalem in the dust, and then scatter her enemies like **fine dust**, like **chaff that passes away**.
   1. **Examine Revelation 11**:**13 and 16:18. Do these seem to echo verse 6?**
   2. **What does God do to the nations that battle Israel**? Refer to verse 7. **You will be punished**: This seems to be directed against the nations that come against Jerusalem. God will allow them to come against the city, and to humble it, but God will punish the nations that have come against His city. **It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams**: Because the LORD will protect Jerusalem, the nations that come against her will ultimately be frustrated. They will be like a man who dreams of food, but wakes up hungry. They will dream of fulfillment, but be unfulfilled.
      1. **Is this an example of Isaiah’s beautiful, figurative language trying to “make an illustration” for his people**?
      2. **See Zechariah 14:1-4 and Revelation 19.** I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle….then, shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations….His feet on the Mount of Olives…..very great valley.
5. **What happens to the nations that fight against Israel, verse 8? See also Psalm 2.**
6. **Explain, verses 9-10, which highlights the spiritual blindness of Jerusalem.** 
   1. **Why the reference to drunkenness and blindness**? **Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind!** Jerusalem’s pride (as expressed in [Isaiah 29:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Isaiah+29:1&t1=en_nas)) has made them spiritually **blind**, and spiritually **drunk**. The LORD tells Jerusalem to **pause and wonder** at this, because though they do it to themselves, they lack the self-awareness to see their condition. **They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink**: This *is not* seen as a “blessing from the Spirit of the LORD.” This is a *curse*, both self induced and sent from the LORD. This speaks powerfully to those today who promote the idea of God “blessing” His people with being “drunk in the Spirit.”
   2. **Because Jerusalem chose blindness and spiritual drunkenness, what did God pour out on her?** **The spirit of deep sleep**. As drunks will “sleep it off,” so the LORD will send blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem into the lethargy and vulnerability of spiritual sleep. But a drunk can become sober after sleep; for those who are spiritually drunk, sleep worsens their condition. These people are drunk with their own power, not from God.
      1. **Refer to the “spiritual sleep in Romans 13:11**, “*And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed*.” **How does this apply to us today?** Christians need to be *awake*, especially knowing the time!
      2. **Because Jerusalem chose blindness and spiritual drunkenness, what did God take away from Israel?** The prophets.. The prophets were silent, and the word of God was neglected because the people *wanted* it that way. In silencing the **prophets** and the **seers**, God simply gave Jerusalem what she wanted.
         1. **Parallel with Amos 8:11-12,** “ *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.”*
7. **In verse 11, is there a reference to Daniel 12:4 where his book is sealed?**
8. **Verses 11-12 point to the spiritual illiteracy of Jerusalem. Discuss.** Isaiah likened Jerusalem to the *blind* and to the *drunk*. Now, he likens them to the *illiterate*. But this isn’t a literal literacy, because the **literate** man receives the **vision** of God, but to him it is like a **sealed** book. When the book of the vision is brought to the **illiterate** man, he does no better (**I am not literate**). Many today “read” or “receive” God’s word like an illiterate man “reads” the newspaper. They can pick out a few words here and there, and they can certainly look at the pictures. They can sit with an open newspaper, enjoy themselves to some degree, and *appear* to be reading. But the true content really escapes them.
   1. **God explains why He sends spiritual blindness on Jerusalem in verse 13-16. Re-state**. Therefore the LORD said: “Inasmuch as these 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, 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.” 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?” 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”?
9. **In verse 13, does God allude to “lying mouths? These people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me**: Jerusalem knew how to *talk the spiritual talk*, but their **hearts** were **far from** God. You can’t always tell a person’s heart by what they *say*.”
   1. **What does Matthew 12:34 say about this same concept?** Jesus said, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks* ([Matthew 12:34](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+12:34&t1=en_nas)). This is a true - but not absolute - principle, because people can **draw near to** God **with their mouths and honor** the LORD **with their lips**, and their hearts can still be **far from** God. Of course, their speech will betray them at one time or another - but just maybe never at church!
   2. See also hypocrisy in Matthew 15:7-9 and Mark 7:6-7. This manner of talking the talk, but not having the heart, didn’t end in Isaiah’s day. **Jesus quoted this passage from Isaiah when He rebuked the religious leaders of His day** for their hypocrisy.
10. **Why the word, “therefore” in verse 14? What is this next section, verses 14-16, pointing to?** The Millennium, and redemption
11. **Discuss the picture of Potter and Clay, verse 16, as in Isaiah 45:9, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Romans 9:19-21.**
12. **1 Corinthians 1:21-29 correlates to verse 16. Examine.……**God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise….Paul was also amazed at the “wisdom” of man, and how it compared to the “foolishness” of God: *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men*. ([1 Corinthians 1:21-25](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Corinthians+1:21-25&t1=en_nas)).
13. **From verses 17-21 we glimpse the promise of restoration. Re-think.**
14. **What is the reference to Lebanon in verse 17?**  **Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?** **Lebanon** was known for its mighty forests, which would be brought low and **turned into a fruitful field**. On the other hand, the **fruitful field** would become **as a forest**. God would cut one down and raise another up.
15. **Verses 17-24 hint at the restoration of Israel in the Millennium. What are God’s promises to His people in these verses? The deaf shall hear . . . the eyes of the blind shall see**: When God’s people are restored, pride no longer prevents them from hearing God’s word or seeing God’s work. Just as much as these are miracles in the natural realm, they are miracles in the spiritual realm also. We need to humbly seek God for ears to hear and eyes to see. **The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD**: **Joy** is the proper reward for **the humble**. When we are **humble** - having an accurate estimation of ourselves, and a proper perspective of ourselves in relation to God and others - our lives are filled with the most **joy**. The **humble** and the **poor** have their joy **in the LORD**. He is a constant source of joy that can never be taken away!
16. **Who is the “terrible one” in verse 20? The terrible one is brought to nothing**: The work of the LORD does not stop at restoring His corrected people. It extends to bringing justice upon the wicked. Singled out for judgment by the prophet are those who have no sense of proportion or justice.
17. **Verses 22-24 specifically point to the “redeemed of Abraham.” When does this redemption occur?** The Millennial Kingdom
18. **This chapter highlights a great deal about spiritual blindness. Make a list.** Spiritual blindness is caused by pride. Spiritual blindness will bring us low. Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual drunkenness. Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual sleep. Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual illiteracy. Spiritual blindness causes hypocrisy. Spiritual blindness makes men believe God cannot know what they think or see what they do. Spiritual blindness makes men deny God as Creator. Spiritual blindness is cured through humility. Spiritual blindness can only be healed through the LORD’s restoration.
    1. **Read Ephesians 4:14-16. Correlate with this passage in Isaiah.**
19. **Sum-up the central theme for Chapter 29. Can it apply to us in today’s world?**

**Chapter 30—Trust in the Lord, not in Egypt!**

Isaiah turns to a local reference. Isaiah warns Hezekiah not to make alliances with Egypt, but to look to the God of Israel for help. Hezekiah is very fearful. Isaiah is speaking to Hezekiah and his advisors. This can also have a deep application to us today. Theme: TO WHOM ARE YOU TURNING FOR HELP? Egypt is symbolic of the world, not God.

1. **Why does God rebuke Israel for putting their trust in Egypt**? Verses 1-2..This prophecy was given at a time when the Assyrian army was attacking Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel would be conquered by Assyria, and the people of Israel would be taken into exile. The Assyrians would then come against the southern kingdom of Judah, and because of this threat the leaders of Judah looked to Egypt for protection against the Assyrian invasion.
2. **God warned Israel in verses 3-5 that there was great folly in trusting Egypt. Why?** : The ambassadors of Egypt came to Judah, and saw that Judah had nothing to “give” them. It was foolish for the leaders of Judah to trust in a nation that looked at them this way!
3. **In verse 4, where are Zoan and Hanes? Zoan, the residence of the kings in lower Egypt, the Tanis of the Greeks, was one of the oldest of Egyptian cities. Hanes, Heracleopolis, or could be Anusis, with a king in residence of the same name, was in the delta of the Nile, and would be the easiest Egyptian city reached by an embassy.**
   1. **This could be the “Tahpanhes,” capital of Egypt mentioned in Jeremiah 43:7-9.**
4. **In verses 6-8, describe what Judah did to earn Egypt’s help. Isaiah seems to imply that Judah tried several times to align herself with Egypt, with no avail, even sending emissaries into the land filled with fiery serpents, lions, and vipers to seek aid and bribe them with some of the best of Judah’s gifts, to no avail.** 
   1. **Would it possible to label Egypt, “Rahab-Hem-Shebeth?” See Psalms 87:4.** Despite the riches that the pack animals bring across the desert, Egypt will not help Judah at all, so one could call Egypt **Rahab-Hem-Shebeth**, which means “Rahab Sits Idle” of “Rahab the Do-Nothing.” **Rahab** is an old root name, for pride and arrogance….for Egypt. but it is also the Hebrew word for *pride*, and is sometimes used as a title for Egypt ([Psalms 87:4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Psalms+87:4&t1=en_nas)). Egypt will sit idly by as the Assyrians trouble Judah.
   2. **Explain the Egyptians’ “non-help.” Refer to verse 7.**
5. **Why did God command them to write all this down? Verse 8**
   1. **Does the Apostle Paul document the same rebellion, the same kind of heart, in 2 Timothy 4:3-4?** “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables*.”
   2. **Examine Deuteronomy 21:18-21 about the punishment for “rebellious children.**” Verse 9
6. **Can you sense the sarcasm of Isaiah’s warning in verse 10.** “See not,” “speak to us in smooth things.”  **Comment**.
7. **Verses 12-14 remind Judah of the outcome and judgment for their trust in Egypt and for their rejection of God’s message**. **Re-state God’s ominous warning to them.** Because you despise this word . . . Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall: God promises that because Judah trusted in Egypt instead of Him, everything will be broken and collapsed. Judah will be like a collapsed wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. Judah will be like a shattered clay pot, which is broken in pieces.
8. **Verse 13 is alluding to a bulging wall, which would make a town unsafe.** A buckling of their town’s wall. **How does God use that picture to remind Israel that they need Him?**
9. **In verse 14, there is an illusion to a potter and his clay.** **Read Isaiah 45:9 and also Romans 9:19-21.**
10. **Compare verse 15 with the earth-dwellers in Revelation who would not repent.** 
    1. **Can we say this a “waiting upon the Lord” command?**
11. **Discuss Isaiah’s play on words in 15-17**.For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” But you would not, and you said, “No, for we will flee on horses”; therefore you shall flee! And, “We will ride on swift horses”; therefore those who pursue you shall be swift! One thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left as a pole on top of a mountain and as a banner on a hill.. **In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength**: God offered to Judah the promise of protection from Assyria. They didn’t need to look to Egypt to help at all. They could have trusted God for His promise.
    1. **In verse 17, talk about “one thousand shall flee**.” **See Leviticus 26:8, 17. One thousand shall flee at the threat of one**: This is reversal of the promise of [Leviticus 26:8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Leviticus+26:8&t1=en_nas), and a fulfillment of the curse promised in [Leviticus 26:17](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Leviticus+26:17&t1=en_nas) : *I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you*.
12. **In verse 18, why does the Lord wait?** The Lord is waiting on us to wait on Him! He wants us to be patient and trust Him.
    1. **Refer to the verse, “they that wait upon the Lord.” See Isaiah 40:**31.
    2. **Restate verses 20-**21. Discuss the images of water and bread.
    3. **Read what Spurgeon says,** “Certain of God’s people are in trouble and distress, and they are eager for immediate rescue. They cannot wait God’s time, nor exercise submission to his will. He will surely deliver them in due season; but they cannot tarry till the hour cometh; like children, they snatch at unripe fruit. ‘To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven’; but their one season is the present; they cannot, they will not wait. They must have their desire instantaneously fulfilled, or else they are ready to take wrong means of attaining it. If in poverty, they are in haste to be rich; and they shall not long be innocent. If under reproach, their heart ferments towards revenge. They would sooner rush under the guidance of Satan into some questionable policy, than in childlike simplicity trust in the Lord and do good. It must not be so with you, my brethren, you must learn a better way.” (Spurgeon)
13. **See 2 Kings 18:3-4**…….Hezekiah does what is right and breaks down the images and the bronze serpent, Numbers 21, which were being worshipped. John 3…..alludes to this. In verse 22 graven images are mentioned to Hezekiah who tore down altars his father, Ahaz, had erected.
14. **In verse 23, notice a change of temperament. When is this?** Millennial
15. **From verses 27 on, one notices a shift to the Tribulation Period.** Comment
    1. **In verse 28, the word “bride/hooks” is the same word seen in Ezekiel 38-**39.
       1. **Could this be a reference to the Gog/Magog War?**
16. **Describe the song in verse 29.……”**Mighty” means rock.
17. **Are the “hailstones” in verse 30 the same as in Revelation 8:7 and 16:21?**
18. **Could the “Assyrian” also be referring to the Anti-Christ?**
    1. **Recall 2 Kings 19:35 where 185,000 Assyrian soldiers are killed overnight.**
19. **What is “Tophet” in verse 33? Examine Jeremiah 7:31**. The lowest part of the Valley of Hinnom. Along southern edge of Jerusalem….where they located the idol Molech….where the children were burned, lowest part is Tophet. Later became a city dump that smolders and burns….like Gehenna. **Tophet** was a place in the Valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem’s walls ([Jeremiah 7:31](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Jeremiah+7:31&t1=en_nas)). The Valley of Hinnom served as Jerusalem’s garbage dump, and the combination of disgusting rubbish and smoldering fires made it a picture of hell. The Hebrew word for hell (*gehenna*) comes from the word for the Valley of Hinnom. Therefore, God says He has a special place in hell for the Assyrian king!
    1. **Explain “For the King it is prepared;” see 2 Kings 19:36-37.—**maybe for Molech or the Anti-Christ it is prepared. God had an eternal place for the Assyrian king who attacked Judah and Jerusalem (**He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood**). But God also had a special judgment for that king on earth. [2 Kings 19:36-37](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+19:36-37&t1=en_nas) describes how when the king of the Assyrians returned home after attacking Judah, his own sons murdered him as he worshipped in the temple of Nisroch his god. “Great men, if not good, shall be greatly tormented; and the more they have of the fat of the earth, the more they are sure to fry in hell.”

**Chapter 31—Forsaking God for Egypt!**

1. **Verses 1-3 describe Judah’s seeking Egypt’s help. Discuss God’s warnings.**
2. **Which two sins did Isaiah confront Judah with?**
   1. **The sin of trusting in Egypt and their military might was mentioned several times. Why did this disturb God?**
   2. **The sin of not looking to the Holy One of Israel seems ludicrous, but it appeared countless times in Isaiah. Comment**.
3. **Verses 2-3 seem to point Israel to trusting God. Do they listen? Do they change and turn from unrighteousness?**
4. **Verse 4 refers to “far future” when the Lord comes to battle for Israel. Review Revelation 19.**
   1. **Jesus is referred to as a “roaring lion” in verse 5. See also Revelation 5:5.**
5. **In verse 5, when Jesus battles for Israel, remind yourself about the picture of the “Great Supper for the Birds” in Revelation19:17. Is this the same story we see in Isaiah?**
6. **In verse 8, which “Assyrian” is detailed here?** 
   1. **Could this look ‘far forward’ to the Anti-Christ?**
   2. **Could this be the Assyrian army’s defeat at the gates of Jerusalem? Review 2 Kings 19:35.** 
      1. **Re-think the detail of the defeat of the Assyrian army overnight?** 
         1. **Who battled for Israel?**
         2. **Who was more than able to protect Judah and Jerusalem?**
7. **In verses 6-9, God offers another invitation for Israel to repent. Restate.**
   1. **Verse 7 looks forward to the Millennium. Who repents? What happens to the idols? Silver and gold?**
8. **Apply Psalm 20:7 to this section of Isaiah.**
9. **In your own words, discuss the application of “depending on Egypt rather than God.”** 
   1. **What does the central theme of “ungodly trust” mean for us in today’s world?**
   2. **Who is our “Egypt?”**
10. **How can the lesson of Chapter 31 help us in modern America?**

**Here are “The Promises!”**

[**1 John 4:16-17**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20John+4:17&t1=en_nas)**, “And we have known and believed the love that** [**God**](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/god.html) **hath to us.** [**God**](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/god.html) **is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in** [**God**](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/god.html)**, and** [**God**](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/god.html) **in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the** [**day**](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/day.html) **of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”**

**Isaiah 29: 19-20, “The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that for iniquity are cut off.”**

**Isaiah 30:18, “Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord *is* a God of justice; blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.”**

**Romans 11:29, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”**