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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 1 (Judgment – But Hope)

TITLE: Program 55 – The City Of God

FRIDAY

OPEN

If Jerusalem is the city of God, if it is the Holy Zion where God is someday going to reign, why would God say, [“Woe to you, O Jerusalem, woe to you, O Ariel, woe to you, O lion of God.”?] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 29:1) If you understand that, then you understand the character of God. You understand the reign of God, the justice of God, the righteousness of God. We’ll look at it today.

PART ONE

The battle that rages for Jerusalem, Beloved, is really in essence Israel’s fault. The fact that they have been kicked out of the land, that they have gone into captivity two different times in 586 B.C. and 70 A.D. is really Israel’s fault. It’s their fault because they didn’t trust in God. It’s their fault because they thought that they could get away with their sin, and they said, “The Lord doesn’t see us.” And they forgot that He is the Potter and they are the clay, that they don’t determine their own destiny except through

obedience and submission to the Potter. Well we have come to Isaiah chapter 29. And we need to cover this whole chapter in this whole program, so we better get moving. Remember we are in the segment of “woes,” six woes from chapter 28 through chapter 33. So for the next couple weeks, we’re going to be looking at these “woes.” But just know this, that there is a lesson for you and for me in all of this. Isaiah chapter 29, verse 1, **“Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped...!” (Isaiah 29:1)** Ariel means, “The lion.” It says, **“...Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.” (Isaiah 29:1)** Go ahead, year after year. Go ahead, go to the temple. Celebrate your feasts. Make sure you’re on schedule, but know this is what He’s going to say, **“I will bring distress to Ariel, and she will be a city of lamenting and mourning....” (Isaiah 29:2)** As a matter of fact, when you read the book of Lamentations, what you read about is the mourning and the lamenting of Jerusalem, of the people of Jerusalem after God destroys them and takes them into captivity under the Babylonians. He says, **“...she will be a city of lamenting and mourning...she will be like an Ariel to me...,”** like a lion to me, **“...I will camp against you encircling you, and I will set [up] siegeworks against you....” (Isaiah 29:2-3)** In other words, an enemy is going to lay siege to your town. An enemy is going to try and go over your walls. **“...And I will raise up battle towers against you. [And] then you will be brought low....” (Isaiah 29:3-4)** I mean, you are going to be brought low. It says, **“...from the earth you will speak....”** You will be so low that you’ll be on the ground. **“...And from the dust where you are prostrate....”** You’ve got your face in the dirt. **“...Your voice will...be like that of a spirit from the ground, and your speech will whisper from the dust.” (Isaiah 29:4)** In other words, I am going to bring you low. He’s not talking about just the buildings of Jerusalem, but He’s talking about the people of Jerusalem. He is talking about His judgment on Ariel (on Jerusalem). It says, “But,” and here’s a wonderful contrast, **“But the multitude of your enemies will become like**

fine dust, and the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; and it will happen instantly, suddenly.” (Isaiah 29:5) In other words, there’s going to come a deliverance. But that deliverance is going to seem to come out of nowhere. It’s going to be like an earthquake that happens. It’s going to be like a tornado that comes. It’s going to come suddenly. **“...from the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and [a] loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and [a] flame of consuming fire. And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel....”** It’s the battle for Jerusalem. **“...Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her, will be like a dream, a vision of the night.” (Isaiah 29:6-7)** In other words, your deliverance is going to come suddenly. All the nations are going to gather around you. All the nations are going to come against you. But all of the sudden your deliverance is going to come. It’s going to come cchhhaa just like that, like thunder, like lightning, like an earthquake. And then when that happens, listen to what He says, **“...[It] will be like a dream, a vision of the night. It will be as 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 [in his dream] he is drinking, but when he awakens, behold, he is faint....”** And it says, **“...and...thus the multitude of all the nations will be who wage war against Mount Zion.” (Isaiah 29:7-8)** In other words, they’re gonna be here and all of the sudden they’re gonna be gone. They’re gonna be dealt with. He says, **“Be delayed and wait, blind yourselves and be blind; they [have] become drunk, but not with wine, they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets...He has covered your heads, the seers. The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, [that] when they give it to the one who is literate [and say] ‘Please read...,’ he will say, ‘[I can’t] I cannot...[it’s] sealed.’ [And] then the book will be given to the one who**

is illiterate, saying, ‘Please read this.’ And he will say, ‘I cannot read [it].’ Then the Lord said, ‘Because...,’” listen carefully. “‘...**Because this people draw near [to Me] with their words....**’” (Isaiah 29:9-12) They’re going up year after year. They’re keeping the feasts. They’re saying the hallelujahs. They’re saying and quoting the Psalms of Ascent as they go up. He says, “‘...**because [they] draw near [Me] 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.**’” (Isaiah 29:13) In other words, they are going through the motions of the religion, but their heart is far from Me. They are going through tradition. They have learned it by rote, but they don’t know the book. They don’t understand. And if they open the vision, they can’t understand it. Why? Because God is a righteous God, God’s throne is justice. His measuring line is justice. His level is righteousness and He has to deal with Israel’s sin. And it is coming, it is judgment. It is coming against Jerusalem. There’s a battle for Jerusalem, and they are going to have all the nations come around it, but all of a sudden “‘...**As the lightning comes from the east...to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.**’” (Matthew 24:27) Now I want you to get this down, and if you have your map that we have been working on all week, what I want you to do is, I want you to put on there the dates of the destructions. First of all, of Samaria, which was 722 B.C. when they were taken captive by Assyria. They were taken into captivity. In 586 B.C., so let’s just draw a line from Jerusalem over to a place on your map that’s in your free study guide that you downloaded by going to preceptsforlife.com write the first siege is 586 B.C. Almost, almost 100 years after Isaiah’s ministry and prophecy is ended. He tells them that this is going to happen. He tells them. He prophesies the future. He tells them how they are to live even when they’re in Babylon. But it doesn’t happen while he’s living. So in 586 B.C. they go into captivity. Now this is recorded for us in 2 Chronicles chapter 36. So you might want to write that down so that you have it, 2

Chronicles chapter 36, and we want to start, I believe it's about verse 15. So let's look at it. It's the last chapter of 2 Chronicles. And this is what it says, it says in verse 15, **"The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again..."** talking about Jerusalem, **"...[again and again] by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and...His dwelling place."** That's the temple. **"But they continually mocked the messengers of God..."** (2 Chronicles 35:15-16) Now remember He has just spoken to them. We saw it in our last program. He's called them scoffers. Scoffers and mockers are basically the same thing. **"...They...mocked the messengers of God, [they] despised His words...[they] scoffed at [the] prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans..."** That's the Babylonians. **"...who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on [them]..."** (2 Chronicles 36:16-17) And you can read it later. And it goes on to say in verse 20, **"Those who...escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia."** (2 Chronicles 36:20) So he tells us about the destruction of Jerusalem. And that destruction of Jerusalem is prophesied about by Isaiah. And yet you know what? It doesn't happen in Isaiah's time. It happens in 586 B.C. And yet this is not the destruction that he's talking about. It is a destruction where they lay up their siege ramps and all of that, but there's no sudden deliverance like we see described in Isaiah. Why? Because Isaiah is taking us beyond this one, beyond the second one, beyond the third one, or to the very third and final destruction of Jerusalem when all of a sudden the Son of Man comes in all of His glory. Take a break, but don't fail to come back.

PART TWO

The battle for Jerusalem, the destruction of Jerusalem happened in 586 B.C. As we're looking at Isaiah chapter 29, God is pronouncing, **"Woe, O Ariel, [woe to you Jerusalem] the city where David...camped...!" (Isaiah 29:1)** And it is the city that David conquered. It was a Jebusite city. And David went up and he conquered that city. And then he had his son Solomon build the temple on the site of the threshing floor that he bought from Arnon. That was God's gift to Israel. It was the place where they were to put their temple. It was the place where God put His name. It was the place where they were to worship God. It was the place where they were to come up to three times a year to keep the feasts. They were going through the motions, but their heart was far from God. And so finally God brought the destruction of Jerusalem. The first one happened in 586 B.C. Now there was another one that was yet to come, and that second one happened in 70 A.D. in the year Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord. So when it happened there, I want you to know it happened on the very same day of the month and the very same month, on Tisha B'Av. The temple was destroyed in 586 B.C., and in 70 A.D. just now as Jesus had prophesied in Luke chapter 21. Because remember Jesus is not only the Messiah, He is not only the Priest, He is not only the King, but He is also the Prophet. And if you will look at Luke chapter 21, Jesus is speaking and this is what He says in verse 20.

"...When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize...her desolation is near." (Luke 21:20) And it says, **"Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those...in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled." (Luke 21:21-22)** And then He goes on and He talks about, **"...there will be great distress [on] the land and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword...[they] will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled**

under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

(Luke 21:23-24) And so what you have is, you have the destruction. This is Solomon’s temple in 586 B.C. It’s Herod’s temple in 70 A.D. where Jesus worshipped, and it is destroyed then. But there is a third destruction coming. And this is the destruction that I believe that He’s referring to in Isaiah because all of the sudden there is deliverance. And that destruction is when? It’s a question mark. But it could be as soon as the temple is rebuilt. There has to be a rebuilding of the temple. And do you know that there are a group of Jews, the Temple Mount Group, that are preparing the vessels for the temple? Do you know that they want to build the temple where the Dome of the Rock is, where Al-Aqsa Mosque is, where you see that golden dome? That’s where it was before. The Muslims, say, “No you cannot build it there.” Why? Because remember at the beginning of the week I talked to you about the Muslim faith. And they have a Muslim space, and once they buy a piece of land they consider that it is theirs forever and ever and ever. And they are willing to defend it to the death and kill any infidel that seeks to take it. So if they’re buying a mosque in your neighborhood, you know that they consider that theirs under their law of community. And they are saying that it is never to be possessed by a Gentile—by an infidel. In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus is giving a prophecy. And He says, “**...when you see the Abomination of Desolation...,**” and this is verse 15, “**...which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...then [let] those who [were] in Judea...flee to the mountains [etc].**” **(Matthew 24:15-16)** It says in verse 21, “**For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will [be].**” **(Matthew 24:21)** And “**...[If they say], ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is’....**” **(Matthew 24:23)** He says, “Don’t go.” He says, “**For just as the lightning [goes] from the east and flashes...to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.**” **(Matthew 24:27)** Verse 30; and it says, “**... and they will see the Son of**

Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.’”

(Matthew 24:30) I believe this is what God is referring to in Isaiah chapter 29 when he talks about the deliverance. He’s going to gather all the nations against Jerusalem. (See Zechariah 14:2) There’s going to be a battle for Jerusalem. Zechariah 14 says, **“Then the LORD [Himself] will go forth [to] fight...,”** on that day. **(Zechariah 14:3) “And the LORD will be King over all the earth....” (Zechariah 14:9)** Beloved, we win! Beloved, no matter what you have to go through, no matter whether you have to suffer for your faith, no matter whether you endure martyrdom or not, you can know this: There is a God in heaven. He is the Almighty Potter and we are the clay in His hands. And we will have victory. He says in Isaiah chapter 29 that these people are serving Me with rote and tradition. (See Isaiah 29:13) And my question to you today, Beloved, is this: Is your religion rote or is it real? Is it a religion or is it a relationship? Are you going through the motions? Do you consider yourself a Christian? What else? You were born in America, well there’s a lot of what else in America now that are not Christians. Do you have a rote religion, or do you really know God? So he goes on to say, **“...I will once again deal marvelously with these people, [wonderfully] marvelous[ly]....” (Isaiah 29:14)** And He’s talking about how He’s going to judge them. And He says, **“Woe to those who...hide their plans from the LORD...whose deeds are done in a dark place, and they say, ‘Who sees us?’ ...‘Who knows...?’”** He says, **“You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, that [which was] made should say to [his] maker, ‘He did not make me’; or what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘He has no understanding?’” (Isaiah 29:15-16)** And this is what He does. Once he calls us to understand that God is the Potter and that He sees what’s going on in verse 17 to 24, he tells us about that glorious day of deliverance when, **“On that day...,”** verse 18, **“...the deaf will hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. The afflicted...will increase**

their gladness in the LORD...the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the ruthless will come to an end...the scorner will be finished, [and] indeed all who are intent on...evil will be cut off; who cause a person to be indicted by a word....” (Isaiah 29:18-21) He goes on to say, “Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: ‘Jacob shall not...be ashamed, nor shall his face...turn pale; but when he sees his children, the work of [his] hands, in his midst, [then] they will sanctify My name; indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. Those who err in mind will know the truth, and those who criticize will accept instruction.’” (Isaiah 29:22-24) Why? God will be here in all of His glory reigning in Jerusalem His city, the city of “Yehovah,” the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That’s the future.