Session 9 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 28-29

1. Introduction
   1. Ask the Lord why He wants us to know this information and why He wants us to tell others about it. By asking this, we dialogue with Him, thereby positioning ourselves to grow in understanding.
   2. Isaiah 28-29 addressed the spiritually blind leaders of Jerusalem. He gave three *woe* *oracles*   
      (28:1-4; 29:1-4; 29:15-16)—they are applicable to leaders in Jerusalem and the nations today.
   3. Outline for Isaiah 28-29

28:1-29 Woe #1—Isaiah’s lament over the leaders of Israel and Jerusalem

28:1-4 Woe #1—to the leadership in Ephraim or Israel (the northern kingdom)   
28:5-6 The beauty of the Messiah will be revealed in the end times  
28:7-13 The woe to Ephraim is extended to Jerusalem (the southern kingdom)  
28:14-22 The leaders of Jerusalem make a covenant of death   
28:23-29 Parable of the farmer: Jerusalem must accept God’s wisdom

29:1-16 Woes #2 & #3—God’s judgment of Jerusalem

29:1-4 Woe #2—Jerusalem will be besieged  
29:5-8 Jerusalem’s enemies will be destroyed  
29:9-14 The blindness of Jerusalem’s leaders   
29:15-16 Woe #3—Jerusalem refusing God’s leadership

29:17-24 The restoration and salvation of Israel

* 1. Isaiah sought to convince the leaders of Jerusalem not to look to other nations for their national protection, but rather to trust the Lord to save them. Isaiah wanted the people in Jerusalem to avoid the suffering that the northern kingdom of Israel endured at the hands of the Assyrians.
  2. Some of the prophecies in Isaiah 28-29 were fulfilled in part in context to Assyria’s aggression against Jerusalem; they will be fulfilled completely in the generation the Lord returns.
     1. Isaiah 28:1-13 was probably spoken just before the Assyria invasion of Israel in 721 BC.
     2. Isaiah 28:14-29:24 was probably spoken before the Assyria invasion of Judah in 701 BC.
  3. The Lord promised victory and salvation for the remnant of His people and to defeat the Assyrian (29:5; 30:31). The total defeat of the Assyrian king and his empire is a type of the Lord defeating the Antichrist as the “end-time Assyrian.” Micah referred to the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” (Mic. 5:5).

4And He [Jesus] shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord…now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; 5And this One [Jesus] shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him… (Mic. 5:4-5)

1. Woe #1—Isaiah’s lament over the leaders of Israel & Jerusalem (28:1-29)
   1. Isaiah lamented the sin and coming suffering of the proud leaders of Ephraim (28:1-4). The Lord longed for the leadership in Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) to repent of their sin.

1Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower…2Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one [Assyria], like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them [Israel] down to the earth with His hand. 3The…drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot… (Isa. 28:1-3)

* + 1. ***Fading flower***: Ephraim had once been admired, but their glory was like a fading flower.
    2. ***Mighty one***: The mighty and strong one spoke of the Assyrian king and his military might.
    3. ***His hand***: The hand of God used Assyria to defeat Israel (Ephraim). God is the prime mover via His leadership over historical events. He works through others who are secondary causes.
    4. ***Trampled***: Assyria violently trampled Israel, coming as a terrible hailstorm and flooding rain (28:2-3). The Assyrians trampled to the ground the once-beautiful flower of Ephraim.
  1. The beauty of the Messiah will be revealed in the end times (28:5-6). Jesus is the glorious crown or beautiful diadem of God’s kingdom. Isaiah emphasized the Messiah’s beauty being openly seen in the end times (4:2; 28:5; 33:17). Jesus will save the remnant of Israel, establish justice in their courts, and help their military withstand the armies of the Antichrist (Zech. 14:1-5).

5In that day the Lord of hosts [Jesus] will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people, 6for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment [their judges], and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate [their military]. (Isa. 28:5-6)

* + 1. ***Sits in judgment***: Jesus will restore justice in legal systems, including their courts and judges.
    2. ***Turn back the battle***: The Lord will empower the Israeli army to resist the Antichrist even *before* Jesus returns. Zechariah emphasized this several times (Zech. 9:13; 10:3-7; 12:5-8) prophesying that the Lord will anoint Israeli soldiers as He anointed David (Zech. 12:8).

5They shall be like mighty men, who tread down their enemies in…in the battle. They shall fight because the Lord is with them…7Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man… (Zech. 10:5-7)

8The Lord will defend…Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David…like the Angel of the Lord before them. (Zech. 12:8)

1. the woe to Ephraim is extended to Jerusalem (Isa. 28:7-13)
   1. The priests and false prophets in Jerusalem were alcoholics, like the leaders in Ephraim (28:7-8).

7But they also [leaders in Jerusalem] have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way… they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8For all tables are full of vomit… (Isa. 28:7-8)

* + 1. ***Err in vision***: Their drunkenness caused them to distort their “visions” and decision-making and to embrace a distorted view of God and His leadership.
    2. ***Intoxicating drink***: Jesus highlighted the serious problem of drunkenness in the end-times. He called His people to pay close attention to their heart to avoid being caught in the snare of drunkenness or immorality to “self-medicate” in seeking an escape with quick relief.

25“There will be…distress of nations…34But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [immorality], drunkenness, and…that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on…the whole earth.”   
(Lk. 21:25-35)

* 1. ***They also***: The woe against the leaders of Ephraim (28:1-4) was extended to the leaders in Jerusalem (28:7, 14) who embraced the same sins. There is debate if verse 7 refers to the rulers in Ephraim or Jerusalem. The context of Isaiah 28-29 is God’s word to the leaders in Jerusalem (28:14).
  2. Isaiah’s audience in Judah agreed that God’s judgment on Israel in 721 BC was proof of the consequences of their rebellion. Yet, the leaders of Jerusalem still embraced the same sin and pride.
  3. The false prophets mocked Isaiah’s teaching as toddler-level gibberish (28:9-10).

9Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. (Isa. 28:9-10)

* 1. *The drunken leaders mocked Isaiah for the simplicity and repetition with which he presented the Lord’s messages. They scoffed at his remarks as Sunday School moralizing, appropriate for infants but irrelevant to men who understand the art of politics. They accused Isaiah of speaking to them like children by advocating trust in God not in foreign alliances.* —***Constable***.
  2. ***Mocking***: Peter warned the saints *first* to be aware of the dangers of a scoffing or mocking spirit. He wanted God’s people to know what they will be up against. All who stand for God’s truth in the end times will be resisted by scoffers or mockers from both, outside and inside of the Church. God’s messengers through history have been mocked most by people with a religious heritage.

3Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days…4saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” (2 Pet. 3:3-4)

* + 1. It was a top priority to Peter to warn the saints not to become cynical. Rather, we are to be “anointed observers” of the signs of the times.
    2. Many draw back from teaching on the end times because of the fear of man. Scoffers will mock those who seek to understand, proclaim, and prepare for the Lord’s return.
  1. Isaiah used the very words of Jerusalem’s leaders to warn them about an Assyrian invasion of their land (28:11-12). If they refused to receive God’s prophetic words, saying they were too simple, sounding like the babbling of “stammering lips,” then He would teach them by foreign oppressors with stammering lips (speaking in a foreign language). He would continue to teach them “a little here and a little there,” but this time through the trials of captivity. The Lord spoke to Jerusalem’s scoffing leaders through the Assyrians who spoke in a foreign language as barbarians, or with stammering lips.

11For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, 12to whom He said, “This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest”… yet they would not hear. 13But the word of the Lord was to them, “Precept upon precept…line upon line, here a little, there a little,” that they might…be broken and snared and caught [taken into captivity]. (Isa. 28:11-13)

* + 1. The Lord chose to speak to His cynical people who were mocking His prophetic words through unintelligible speech that was to them as stammering lips or a foreign tongue.
    2. Paul used 28:11 to affirm speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:21). Again, God choses to speak to cynical people through unintelligible speech that seems as stammering lips of another tongue.
  1. ***Caught***: Sennacherib claimed to have taken 200,000 captives from Judah in 701 BC.
  2. ***To rest***: God had promised “rest” to any in Israel who honored God’s covenant. This rest was available to those faithful to the covenant with Lord and who refused the covenant of death.

1. The leaders of Jerusalem make a covenant of death (Isa. 28:14-22)
   1. The rulers in Jerusalem made a covenant of death (28:14-15). This was a political covenant or treaty with a nation—either with Egypt to help protect them from Assyria (30:1-3) or directly with the Assyrians to buy protection. Yet Israel had already made a covenant with the Lord for protection (Ex. 19).

14Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule…in Jerusalem, 15because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol [hell] we are in agreement.   
When the overflowing scourge [of the Antichrist] passes through, it will not come to us…” 16“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily. 17Also…the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. 18Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. 19As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over…it will be a terror just to understand the report.” (Isa. 28:14-19)

* 1. ***I lay in Zion a stone***: Israel’s safety is not found in political alliances, but in Messiah. God promised to lay a firm foundation in Jerusalem that they could build on and find protection in. Jesus is the tested and proven rock of safety who never fails. (Ps. 118:22; Zech. 3:9; 10:4; Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6).
  2. ***Cornerstone***: Acornerstone (or foundation stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones are set in reference to this stone, so the cornerstone determines the positioning of the entire structure. Jesus is the cornerstone who is precious in the sight of God and His people and is the sure foundation upon which we can build our life. This precious stone is the beautiful and glorious Messiah in 28:5.
     1. In the generation the Lord returns, a relationship with Jesus who is “the cornerstone laid in Zion” will be the only place of refuge from the storm of the Antichrist and the judgment of God.
     2. At the end of the Great Tribulation, the leaders of Jerusalem will receive Jesus as Messiah,   
        the One who will deliver them from the “covenant of death” (Mt. 23:39).
  3. ***Whoever believes***: This includes trusting in Jesus’ leadership in the time of escalating darkness instead of being overcome by fear, offense, or deception. God will preserve all believers who lean on Jesus, the cornerstone. Anyone can believe this testimony and rest all of their hopes on this foundation.
  4. ***Not act hastily***: Those who trust God need not act in hastily in fear and panic.
  5. ***Covenant of death***: The scornful leaders in Jerusalem imagined that by their superior negotiating skills that they could make alliances that would enable them to escape trouble. Isaiah sarcastically told them that their covenant was a covenant with death (28:18) since it would result in many people dying.
  6. ***Annulled***: The covenant with death was annulled or shown to be invalid when it did not save Israel from being trampled underfoot by the invading armies of Assyria in Isaiah’s day, and it will not protect Israel or any nation from the rage of the Antichrist in the end times.
  7. ***Righteous plummet***: Isaiah continued to use architectural imagery by speaking of measuring everything by a plummet or plumb line of righteousness. In the Great Tribulation, the Lord will measure the rebellious people in Israel and in the nations by His plumb line of righteousness.
     1. A measuring line was used by a carpenter to determine the exact measurements for the walls of a building. A plummet is a piece of lead attached to a string used to make a perfectly straight line.
     2. The Lord will make righteousness His measuring line for each person and nation just as an architect measures everything in an exacting way. Righteousness will prevail instead of sin.
  8. ***Justice***: His judgments are always according to justice. They are neither too severe nor too lenient.
  9. ***The refuge of lies***: The covenant of death was a “counterfeit refuge” that was based on lies, namely the lie that it would protect Israel from the coming storm. The false hope of security was based on lies. These lies were swept away or exposed by the overflowing waters of the Assyrian invasion.
  10. ***Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies***: God will use a hail storm to sweep away or expose the false hope of those taking refuge in lies. This speaks of the suddenness and totality of destruction. Flooding waters will overflow the hiding place—the place they seek for safety—in the covenant of death.
      1. The storm of God’s judgment through the Assyrian invasion overwhelmed those who took “refuge in lies.” God’s judgments are compared to a storm of hail that will reveal the falsehood of their crafty, sinful ways and will expose the deceptive nature of their covenant of death.
      2. God’s judgments are often compared to a storm of rain and hail and flooding waters (Ex. 9:18-34; Josh. 10:11; Ps. 78:47-48; Isa. 18:2, 17; 30:30; Ezek. 13:11, 13; 38:22; Hag. 2:17; Rev. 8:7; 11:19: 16:21; flood—Isa. 30:28; 59:19; Jer. 46:6-8; 47:2; Dan. 9:26; 11:22; Hab. 3:10; Nah. 1:8; Rev. 12:15-16; storm—Ps. 83:15; Prov. 1:27; Isa. 25:4; 28:2; Ezek. 38:9)
  11. The context of Isaiah 28 is eschatological. The four chapters before Isaiah 28 speak of the end times. The verses immediately after 28:18 are eschatological, describing God’s purposes on the whole earth (28:22). Between Isaiah’s *two references* to the “covenant with death” (28:15, 18) is the promise of Jesus coming as the “cornerstone” (28:16). This suggests that the activity associated with the “covenant of death” occurs both *before* (28:15) and *after* (28:18) Jesus’ first coming was as the stone laid in Zion. Isaiah spoke of a storm in a time *after* Jesus came to be laid in Zion as the foundation stone.

1. Israel will make a covenant with the Antichrist
   1. Gabriel spoke to Daniel about the final 7 years of this age before the Messiah would come to rule the world from Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24-27). This final seven-year period just before Jesus’ return is often referred to as “Daniel’s 70th week.”

27He [Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [7 years]; but in the middle of the week he [Antichrist] shall bring an end to sacrifice [thus, breaking the covenant] … (Dan. 9:27)

* + 1. ***One week***: Gabriel spoke of these seven years as a *week*. Israel referred to a week as being comprised of years (7 years) as well as a week of days (7 days).
    2. ***Many***: This political covenant will affect Israel and many nations. I assume the 10-nation confederation under the Antichrist will be involved in this covenant (Rev. 17:12).
  1. Israel’s leaders will make a covenant with the Antichrist that will result in them giving their authority to him seven years before Jesus’ coming (Isa. 28:14-18; Ezek. 38:8-12; Dan. 9:27; 11:45; 14; 39:26; Zech. 11:16; Lk. 19:11-28; Jn. 5:43; 1 Thes. 5:3). The leaders of Israel may initially assume that they are smarter than the Antichrist (hiding behind a façade of loving peace) and can out-negotiate him.
  2. The Great Tribulation starts with the Antichrist establishing a peace treaty (for 7 years in duration). It results in a counterfeit peace that lasts 3½ years (the first half of the final 7 years), then suddenly the Antichrist will break the treaty, resulting in the termination of Israel’s sacrifices in the temple.

3When they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains [Great Tribulation] upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thes. 5:3)

* 1. The Antichrist will use this covenant to get a stronghold in the land of Israel. He will plant part of his headquarters in Israel. The “glorious holy mountain” is in Jerusalem (the site of the temple).

45And he [Antichrist] shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas [Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea] and the glorious holy mountain [Jerusalem]… (Dan. 11:45)

* 1. Israel will have a short season of peace before they are attacked by the Antichrist (Ezek. 38:8-12). Israel’s time of peace and safety is seen in being content to live in “unwalled villages” instead of feeling the need for strong walls to ensure their security. The man (Antichrist) who helped to establish peace will eventually invade them with foreign armies.

8In the latter years you [Antichrist] will come into the land of those…gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel…brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9You will ascend, coming like a storm…you and all your troops and many peoples with you…you will make an evil plan: 11you will say, “I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely… 12to stretch out your hand against [Israel]…” (Ezek. 38:8-12)

* 1. ***Sheol***: The rulers in Jerusalem will made a covenant with Sheol or hell. There will be a demonic, supernatural element to this covenant since Satan will give the Antichrist his throne and authority (Rev. 13) and the Antichrist will ascend from the hell after his deadly head wound (Rev. 17:8).

15… “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol [hell] we are in agreement…”   
(Isa. 28:15)

2The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and great authority. (Rev. 13:2)

8The beast [Antichrist] that you saw…will ascend out of the bottomless pit… (Rev. 17:8)

1. The Lord’s unusual act: Judging His people (28:21-22)
   1. The Lord will arise to do an unusual act (28:21-22).

21For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim; He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon— that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual act.   
22Now therefore, do not be mockers, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard from   
the Lord God of hosts a destruction determined even upon the whole earth. (Isa. 28:21-22)

* + 1. ***Mount Perazim***: The Philistines attacked David and Israel’s army at Mount Perazim.   
       God released a sudden, total breakthrough for David (2 Sam. 5:17-20).
    2. ***Valley of Gibeon***: David defeated the Philistines by God’s help at the Valley of Gibeon   
       ([1 Chr. 14:13-16](http://biblehub.com/1_chronicles/14-13.htm)). In the Valley of Gibeon, God sent hailstones to help Joshua defeat an Amorite alliance of nations (Josh. 10:10).
    3. ***Unusual act***: He would come against His own people, scattering them to a distant land in captivity. The work of judgment is called “unusual” since He delights to deliver His people.
    4. Isaiah later elaborated on this unusual act referring to it as a marvelous work (29:13-14).

13… “these people…honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me… 14Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom [their plans for safety] of their wise men shall perish…”  
(Isa. 29:13-14)

* + 1. This disciplining of His people by the sword of foreigners is an unusual act to God ([Hab. 1:5](http://biblehub.com/habakkuk/1-5.htm)).

5“Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylonians], a bitter and hasty nation…” (Hab. 1:5-6)

1. parable of the farmer: Jerusalem must accept God’s wisdom (28:23-29)
   1. Isaiah described a farmer who accepts God’s instructions in farming (28:26, 29), instead of rejecting them like the leaders of Ephraim and Judah did. The farmer’s response illustrates that God teaches people how to live (28:26) as well as the different ways that He disciplines His people and the nations (28:27-28). Isaiah advised them to follow the example of the farmer who receives God’s wise instruction.
   2. Isaiah called the scoffers in Jerusalem to listen to God’s message—he used a farmer to illustrate his point (28:23-29). Immediately after Isaiah declared God’s determination to use destruction in various places across the whole earth (28:22), he then called the leaders of Jerusalem be careful to listen. The Lord sent Assyria to destroy Israel, but He will save Jerusalem from the Assyrians, postponing His discipline, because He found a measure of repentance in Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah.

23Give ear and hear my voice, listen…24Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? [No!]. Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? [No!] 25When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cummin and scatter the cummin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place? [Yes!] 26For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him. 27For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; but the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, and the cummin with a rod. 28Bread flour must be ground; therefore he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horsemen. 29This also comes from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance. (Isa. 28:23-29)

* 1. Isaiah described a wise farmer who listened to God’s teachings. The leaders in Jerusalem should follow the example of a wise farmer. God instructs farmers not only on the agricultural processes but also on the different approaches they were to use when threshing the grain (28:26, 29).
  2. The main point is that God teaches His people how to live (28:26) and He uses different approaching (especially when threshing or judging) to help His people fulfill His purposes (28:27). The Lord’s leadership and counsel is wonderful and excellent (28:29).
     1. God’s counsel to the leaders of Jerusalem was to not repeat the sins that the leaders of Israel made (28:1-4) in their drunkenness, spiritual blindness and in depending on political alliances.
     2. God uses different strategies that best apply to the different situation when leading His people. Sometimes He emphasizes promises of blessing and other times warnings of judgment.
  3. Isaiah asked rhetorical questions about a farmer’s work to illustrate how he followed God’s instructions (28:24-26). He asked if a farmer spent all of his time plowing his field? The answer is no. The farmer does not plow for the sake of plowing, but rather to prepare for his intended crop.
     1. In 28:25, he asked if a farmer spent time sowing his seeds? The answer is yes. A farmer plowed his field, then smoothed it out before sowing the seed. Why? Because God taught him these simple principles so that the farmer would have fruitful fields. In overseeing Judah, God’s vineyard, the leaders in Jerusalem should follow the example of the wise farmer.
     2. A farmer follows a wisdom in sowing each different type of seed so that it has the best opportunity to bring forth fruit. It is best to sow some seeds under the ground and yet to sow others seeds on top of it. God taught farmers the differences in sowing different crops.
  4. Isaiah described the different ways that a farmer threshed different grains (28:27-28). A farmer threshes cummin and grain in different ways. This is also wisdom that the Lord teaches. Threshing is often used as a symbol of judgment. Isaiah pointed out the unique way that each kind of seed must be treated. In one case a farmer might strike a plant with a stick, causing the grain to fall to the ground, but other grains required the force of driving a threshing sledge over it.
  5. God uses varying measures of discipline according to the condition of His people or the nations at various times in their history. God’s approach to Judah at that time was different than how He was disciplining Israel.

1. Woe #2—Isaiah’s lament of God’s judgment of Jerusalem (Isa. 29:1-16)
   1. Isaiah predicts a siege of Jerusalem (29:1-14). Here, from 28:18-22, Isaiah continued the theme of God’s judgment on Jerusalem.
   2. Isaiah spoke this woe oracle to Ariel, referring to Jerusalem (29:1) and Mount Zion (29:8). The Hebrew word *Ariel* means the *Lion of God* or the *altar* where sacrifices were burned (Ezek. 43:16). Jerusalem was prophetically called Ariel since she would become like the altar—a scene of burning. This went against their “Zion theology” which presumed that God would never destroy Jerusalem.

1“Woe to Ariel…the city where David dwelt! …2Yet I will distress Ariel; there shall be heaviness and sorrow…3I will encamp against you all around, I will lay siege against you with a mound…” (Isa. 29:1-3)

* + 1. It was very offensive to the leaders in Jerusalem to hear Isaiah, who lived in Jerusalem, prophesy of their city being besieged by the God of Israel instead of being protected by Him.
    2. In the end times, the Lord’s messengers will again need to warn the city of Jerusalem that it will be surrounded and besieged by all the nations (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2, Rev. 16:14).

2“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples [nations], when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3And it shall happen…that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone…all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”   
(Zech. 12:2-3)

* 1. Jerusalem’s enemies will be destroyed in an instant (29:5-8). The sudden destruction of Jerusalem’s enemies occurred “in an instant” (29:5). This prophetic word was partially fulfilled in history when God killed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night in 701 BC (Isa. 37:36).

5Moreover the multitude of your foes [enemies] shall be like fine dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones like chaff that passes away; yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly. 6You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire. 7The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel, even all who fight against her…shall be as…8when a hungry man dreams…and his soul is still empty…so the multitude of all the nations…who fight against Mount Zion. (Isa. 29:5-8)

* 1. ***The multitude of all the nations***: God will gather all nations to fight Jerusalem (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2, Rev. 16:14). Then He will destroy those nations whom He used to discipline Israel.

1Behold, the day of the Lord…2I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken…half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3Then the Lord will…fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle…5Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You. (Zech. 14:1-5)

* 1. ***Punished by earthquake and storm***: The terrible army (29:5) against Israel will be destroyed. Isaiah addressed them directly as if he saw them before him—sudden transitions like this are not uncommon within Isaiah. The destruction of the Antichrist’s army fulfills the details in 29:6 (Ezek. 38:18-23).

18“…when Gog [Antichrist] comes against…Israel…19there shall be a great earthquake …   
22I will rain down on him…flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.” (Ezek. 38:18-22)

* 1. ***In an instant***: The Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem was supernaturally destroyed when the angel of Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36). Jesus will easily and quickly kill the Antichrist and his armies what will be gathered around Jerusalem (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:19-21).

36The angel of the Lord…killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose…in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. (Isa. 37:36)

1. the spiritual blindness of Jerusalem’s leaders (29:9-14)
   1. The leaders of Jerusalem were spiritually blind (29:9-14). Because they refused to respond to God’s promises and trust Him in a time of trouble, God hardened their hearts with spiritual blindness.

9…Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine…10The Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. 11The whole vision has become to you like…a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one…saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” …13Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people…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 14…I will do a marvelous work among this people… the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.” (Isa. 29:9-14)

* 1. ***Blind yourselves***: Isaiah spoke sarcastically in telling them to blind themselves (28:9). Their bad choices resulted in losing spiritual understanding and developing a twisted view of reality that prevented them from receiving spiritual understanding. God hardened their heart, pouring on them a “deep sleep” of spiritually blindness (6:9-10). He “sealed” His truth from them by blinding their eyes. God gave each person a free will; thus, they can choose to refuse His leadership, resulting in spiritual blindness.
  2. ***Closed your eyes***: Their “professional prophets” did not have insight into what was coming.
  3. ***Sealed***: God hides His plans from those who refused to honor Him. The Lord blinded the prophets, making prophetic revelation “like” a sealed or closed book (29:9). They were even unable to grasp important aspects of Isaiah’s prophecies or to see their plain meaning.
  4. ***Removed their hearts far from Me***: They were diligent to embrace religious rituals, but their heart was far from engaging in a real relationship with God (Mt. 15:9). They focused on keeping the commands or religious rituals that they had added to the real and important commandments that God had given them.
  5. ***Marvel***: God judged them with spiritual blindness. This caused others to “**marvel**”**—**that the men whom they considered wise were unable to grasp God’s intentions in His word and in prophetic revelation. For example, the king’s advisors made wrong political alliances seeking to save them from Assyria.

1. Woe #3—Isaiah’s lament over Jerusalem’s refusal of God (29:15-16)
   1. Isaiah lamented that the leaders of Jerusalem made plans without consulting God (29:15-16). He pointed out their determination to make their political plans in secret hoping to “hide” them from God.

15Woe 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?” 16Surely 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”? (Isa. 29:15-16)

* 1. ***Things turned upside down***: The result was that their thinking became very distorted.
  2. ***Potter***: The royal counselors were but clay, so why did they insist on questioning the sovereign Lord who is the potter? God had already revealed that He would destroy the Assyrians (29:5-6). They denied God’s sovereign power and plan, seeing themselves as having the power and wisdom to maneuver politically to avoid the trouble that the Assyrians might bring. God formed man out of clay (Gen 2:7), so men of clay should never challenge God’s sovereign plans which are powerful and wise.

1. The restoration and salvation of Israel (Isa. 29:17-24)
   1. Jacob, or all Israel, will trust, love, and fear the Lord when Jesus returns (29:17-24). The Lord will openly show His sovereignty as the potter (29:16) by restoring the spiritual, physical, and social conditions of Israel and the nations. This will promise will occur in fullness in the Millennium.
   2. The Lord will heal the land and the people of Israel (29:17-19).

17Is 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? 18In 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. 19The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. (Isa. 29:17-19)

* + 1. ***A very little while***: This phrase in 28:17 and “in that day” in 28:18 are usually used in relationship to the end of the age and the millennial kingdom.
    2. ***Lebanon***:The Lord will transform nature, including making Lebanon a fruitful field (32:15). The fruitfulness of the land of Israel is an important aspect of prophetic Scriptures (Isa. 30:23; 35:1-2, 6-7; Ezek. 34:26-29; 47:6-12; Hos. 2:21-22; Joel 2:21-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13). After Jesus returns to Jerusalem, the land of Israel will be like the garden of Eden (Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 34:29; 36:35).
    3. ***The deaf shall hear***: The deaf will hear, and the blind will see (29:18). This speaks of both spiritual and physical healing of the deaf and blind. This reverses the spiritual blindness described in 29:9-12. The spiritually blind nation of Israel (6:9-10; 28:12; 29:9-12; 30:9) will love and obey Jesus.
    4. ***Joy***: Jesus’ leadership will cause the formerly-oppressed Jewish people to walk in joy (29:19).
  1. The terrible one—the Antichrist—will be destroyed and sinful leaders removed (Isa. 29:20-21).

20For the terrible one is brought to nothing, the scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off—21who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just by empty words. (Isa. 29:20-21)

* + 1. ***The terrible one***: Israel’s salvation occurs in context to Jesus destroying the Antichrist.
    2. ***All who watch for iniquity***: Those who watch or look for ways to express their sinful ways will be cut off or removed (29:20). Isaiah described false witnesses accusing innocent people in legal battles and the corrupt lawyers, judges, and the legal systems under their control (29:21).
  1. Israel will be transformed (29:22-24). They will relate to and acknowledge God as the Most High.

22Therefore thus says the Lord… “Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale; 23but 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. 24These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine.” (Isa. 29:22-24)

* + 1. ***Jacob***: This speaks of all the tribes of Israel—those in the north and south.
    2. ***They will never be ashamed***: They will never rebel against God again nor be defeated by their enemies that caused their face to grow pale.
    3. ***His children***: The children of Israel shall live holy lives and walk in the fear of God (29:23).
    4. ***Hallow My name***: They will receive true understanding of who the Lord is and who they are to Him (29:24). This will be a total reversal of their current state of rebellion and spiritual blindness. They will see God’s kindness and goodness to them as a nation. Thus, they will joyfully respond to His leadership instead of rebelling and complaining against Him.