

# ISAIAH 26

All We Are is Dust in the Wind<sup>a</sup>  
(Isaiah 29:1-24)

Isaiah 29:1-24 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

## The Siege of Jerusalem

**29<sup>b</sup>** Ho Ariel, Ariel,  
the city where David encamped!  
Add year to year;  
let the feasts run their round.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Yet I will distress Ariel,  
and there shall be moaning and lamentation,  
and she shall be to me like an Ariel.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> And I will encamp against you round about,  
and will besiege you with towers  
and I will raise siegeworks against you.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> Then deep from the earth you shall speak,  
from low in the dust your words shall come;  
your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost,  
and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> But the multitude of your foes shall be like small dust,  
and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff.  
And in an instant, suddenly,<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>6</sup> you will be visited by the Lord of hosts<sup>h</sup>  
with thunder and with earthquake and great noise,  
with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>7</sup> And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,  
all that fight against her and her stronghold and distress her,  
shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>8</sup> As when a hungry man dreams he is eating  
and awakes with his hunger not satisfied,  
or as when a thirsty man dreams he is drinking  
and awakes faint, with his thirst not quenched,  
so shall the multitude of all the nations be  
that fight against Mount Zion.<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>9</sup> Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor,  
blind yourselves and be blind!  
Be drunk, but not with wine;  
stagger, but not with strong drink!<sup>l</sup>  
<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>m</sup>

<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>n</sup> <sup>12</sup> And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."<sup>o</sup>

<sup>13</sup> And the Lord<sup>p</sup> said:

"Because this people draw near with their mouth  
and honor me with their lips,  
while their hearts are far from me,  
and their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote;<sup>q</sup>

<sup>14</sup> therefore, behold, I will again  
do marvelous things with this people,  
wonderful and marvelous;  
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hid."<sup>r</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Woe to those who hide deep from the Lord<sup>s</sup> their counsel,  
whose deeds are in the dark,  
and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"<sup>t</sup>

<sup>16</sup> You turn things upside down!  
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay;  
that the thing made should say of its maker,  
"He did not make me";  
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,  
"He has no understanding"?<sup>u</sup>

## Hope for the Future

<sup>17</sup> Is it not yet a very little while  
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?<sup>v</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In that day the deaf shall hear  
the words of a book,  
and out of their gloom and darkness  
the eyes of the blind shall see.<sup>w</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord,  
and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For the ruthless shall come to nought and the scoffer cease,  
and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off,<sup>y</sup>

<sup>21</sup> who by a word make a man out to be an offender,  
and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,  
and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.<sup>z</sup>

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

"Jacob shall no more be ashamed,  
no more shall his face grow pale.<sup>aa</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For when he sees his children,  
the work of my hands, in his midst,  
they will sanctify my name;  
they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,  
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.<sup>bb</sup>

<sup>24</sup> And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,  
and those who murmur will accept instruction.”<sup>cc</sup>

**Revised Standard Version (RSV)**

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<sup>a</sup> **Chapter 28** is the first chapter of a new section of Isaiah through Chapter 39, dealing more directly with actual historical events during Isaiah’s lifetime, and in particular, the invasion of Judah by King Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 B.C. which occurred during the reign of Hezekiah in Judah (2Ch 29-32; ). Hezekiah became sole King in 715 B.C. shortly after Assyria had conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and deported many of its people. He immediately began the cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem (2Ch 29:1-5; 2Ki 18:3-6). Because it took time to cleanse the Temple and consecrate enough priests, the celebration of the first Passover after the Temple was cleansed was delayed for a month (2Ch 30:2-4). Hezekiah sent letters to those who remained in Israel after the deportations inviting them to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with Judah (2Ch 30:1, 6) but most in Israel laughed and scorned the invitations (2Ch 30:10) though some obeyed the summons (2Ch 30:11). After this celebration, those who had been in Jerusalem returned to their homes in Judah and destroyed the altars on the high places and the Asherah poles (2Ch 31:1). Hezekiah, who had been a vassal of Assyria rebelled against the new Assyrian King, Sennacherib (2Ki 18:7), and made an alliance with Egypt against Assyria (Is 30:1-5, 31:1-3) which Isaiah had condemned as a failure to trust only in the Lord for salvation. This rebellion may have had something to do with Hezekiah’s religious revival (2Ch 32:1; 2Ki 18:22) though this is not certain. Seeing that his rebellion was likely to draw an Assyrian response, Hezekiah strengthened the defenses of Jerusalem including enclosing the primary water source for the capital in a wall and building Hezekiah’s Tunnel to bring water from the source to the City in a way protected from besiegers (2Ch 32:2-5). Sennacherib, whose army consisted of troops from many nations subject to Assyria, first conquered the rest of Judah (2Ki 18:13; Is 36:1) and threatened Jerusalem. Hezekiah tried to buy Sennacherib off by giving him all the gold and silver available from the Temple (2Ki 18:15-16) but Sennacherib was not appeased. He then besieged Jerusalem and attempted to undermine the morale of the defenders and intimidate Hezekiah into surrender (2Ch 32:9-19; 2Ki 18:18-37; Is 36:2-22) by, among other things, insulting God by pointing out that none of the gods of the other nations Assyria had conquered had been able to save their nations (2Ki 18:33-35). The Egyptians did not come to the aid of Judah as they were required to do by the alliance (2Ki 18:21; Is 36:6). In despair (2Ki 19:1-3; Is 37:1-3), Hezekiah joined Isaiah in praying to God for the salvation of Jerusalem (2Ch 32:20; 2Ki 19:14-20; Is 37:14-22). God responds through Isaiah’s voice assuring Jerusalem that it will be saved (2Ki 19:21-34; Is 37:6-7, 37:21-35) and sending a plague to destroy the Assyrian army outside Jerusalem’s walls (2Ch 32:21-22; 2Ki 19:35-36; Is 31:8, 37:36-37). Chapters 28–31, the first group of chapters in this new section of Isaiah, alternate between threats of the danger of making an alliance with Egypt with assurances of the power and protection of the Lord. **Chapter 28** deals with the question of whether Jerusalem will trust in its own efforts and alliances with other nations for its protection, or it will trust in the Lord. **Chapter 29** promises that while Judah will suffer a chastening at the hand of the Lord, it will be given a reprieve from final destruction.

<sup>b</sup> **Chapter 29** consists of three parts: (1-8) the chastisement and deliverance of Jerusalem, (9-14) blindness and illumination, and (15-24) spiritual transformation of the elect. As a whole, the chapter tells of story of Jerusalem coming under siege by the Assyrians and being on the verge conquest. On the eve of battle, the Assyrians attempted to demoralize the defenders and induce Jerusalem to surrender by denigrating the alliance with Egypt and the God of Jacob. Hezekiah panicked and summoned Isaiah to help him pray to God for deliverance. That very evening, Jerusalem was indeed delivered because the Assyrian army was destroyed overnight by a plague or some other disaster and had disappeared the next morning. An ordinary person, seeing this, would attribute the deliverance to God.

<sup>c</sup> (1) Woe (הוי, *hoy*) to Jerusalem (Is 33:7, 36:1-2) even though it is observing the outside manifestations of religion by celebrating its feasts (Is 1:14, 5:12, 22:12-13). Jerusalem, the city that David (דָּוִד) had besieged and conquered for God (2Sm 5:6-9), will now be besieged by the Assyrians. Just as Chicago is called the “Second City” or the “Windy City”, Ariel (אֲרִיאֵל, *Ariel*) is a poetic name for Jerusalem appearing only in this Chapter, though the word is used once more in Nehemiah, Neh 8:16, as a proper name for a person. It is frequently interpreted as a combination of the Hebrew for “lion” (אֲרִי, *ari*) and “god” (אֵל, *el*) meaning “lion of God” (2Sm 23:20; 1Ch 11:22). In Gn 49:9 Jacob refers to his son Judah, Patriarch of the tribe and Kingdom of Judah, as a “young lion” (אֲרִיָּה, *aryeh*). David famously killed a lion and a bear to defend his flock (1Sm 17:34-36) and there are

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comparisons of him to a Lion. Jesus is referred to as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rv 5:5). God Himself is often compared to a lion (Jb 10:16; Jr 25:38; Hos 5:14, 11:10, 13:8). The Temple itself looked somewhat like a sitting lion. *Ariel* has also been interpreted as “altar hearth of God” from the Hebrew for hearth (אֲרִיאֵל, *ariel*) which usually appears with the word for altar (e.g. Ez 43:13–16), “city of God,” or “foundation of God.” Most commentators interpret the end of this verse here translated, “Add year to year; let the feasts run their round” as referring to the outside observance of religious forms. Jhan would view this as God saying that the people and leaders of Jerusalem can keep doing what they are doing, including those religious forms, but in a year God’s judgment will come. The Hebrew for this part of the verse is literally “add year to year, let them kill the sacrifices.” Jerusalem will be like ash on God’s altar because its pride had prevented it from seeing who God is (Rm 1:18-23). The experience of the siege may seem like a descent into the underworld for the people of Jerusalem (Is 5:14-15, 8:19). The Septuagint reads, “Alas for the city of Ariel, which David besieged. Gather your fruits year by year; eat, for you shall eat with Moab.”

<sup>d</sup> (2) The Lord will bring this calamity on Jerusalem through God’s agent Assyria, and there will be distress and lamenting within the city (Is 3:26, 33:7; Lam 2:5). In their self-satisfaction and arrogance the people of Jerusalem had lost sight of God. God wanted to get their attention and so would destroy Jerusalem’s sense of security. In a play on words, Ariel, the poetic name of Jerusalem as God’s Lion, may be used at the end of this verse in the sense of the altar hearth indicating that Jerusalem, the city where sacrifices are performed, will itself become the sacrifice. The Septuagint reads, “For I will grievously afflict Ariel; and her strength and her wealth shall be Mine.”

<sup>e</sup> (3) God will Himself besiege Jerusalem in a reference to the siege of Jerusalem by Assyria in 701 B.C. (2Ki 25:1) though it is also a model for other future sieges of the city (Ezk 4:2, 17:17, 21:22, 26:8; Jr 6:3; Lk 19:43-44).

<sup>f</sup> (4) When Jerusalem is besieged its inhabitants will be as if dead, and their speech quiet, as if spoken by the dead who are silent and powerless (Is 8:19). Their pride is crushed when Sennacherib appears at the city gates and their Egyptian allies do not (Is 2:11-12). There are times in our lives when things become so bad that God gets our attention but does not destroy us.

<sup>g</sup> (5) The Lord promised Abraham that he would be the father of a nation whose numbers would be like the sand on a beach or the stars in the sky (Gn 15:5, 22:17). Here Judah’s enemies would be as numerous as fine dust or chaff but would be blown away suddenly and surprisingly just as the Assyrians were defeated by God in one night (2Ch 32:21-22; 2Ki 19:35-36; Is 17:13-14, 31:8, 37:36-37; Ps 18:42-43; Jb 21:18; 1Th 5:3). “**Foes**” here is from the Hebrew for strangers (זָר, *zawr*). The Septuagint for vs. 5-6 reads, “But the wealth of the ungodly shall be as dust from a wheel, and the multitude of them that oppress you as flying chaff, and it shall be suddenly as a moment, from the Lord of Hosts; for there shall be a visitation with thunder, and earthquake, and a loud noise, a rushing tempest, and a devouring flame of fire.”

<sup>h</sup> **Lord of Hosts** - יהוה, *Yahovah*, though usually unpronounced by Jews, joined to Sabaoth (צְבָאוֹת, *tsaba*’).

<sup>i</sup> (6) It is not clear who the objects of God’s judgment are in this verse since the words appear to be addressed to the people of Jerusalem, but the context of verses 5 and 7 would make the object the Assyrians. It may be that both are implied in that the Assyrians visited Ariel, to be followed by God’s visitation of the Assyrians to defeat them in a night. But in all events, God’s presence bestows mercy and grace (Ex 13:22; Ru 1:6; 1Sm 2:21; 1Ki 19:11-12; Jr 29:10), but can also bring devastation (1Sm 2:10; Is 10:3, 19:16, 26:14-21, 30:27-30). This judgment may be expressed in thunder, earthquakes, wind and consuming fire (Mt 24:7; Mk 13:8; Lk 21:11; Rv 11:13-19, 16:18). God’s sovereignty determines what will happen to a person or group, whether they will be under blessing or curse (Dt 30:19-20), placed in battle or rescued from danger.

<sup>j</sup> (7) Those who are besieging Jerusalem shall be defeated in a single night and disappear like a dream (Mi 4:11-13; Zec 12:9; Jb 20:8; Ps 73:20; Is 17:14). Just when the attackers think their capture of Jerusalem is certain, the Lord will snatch victory from their hands and save the city. The sudden shift from the Lord’s attack on the city to its deliverance by Him is not explained here but is likely the result of the disparagement of God by the Assyrians (2Ch 32:9-19; 2Ki 18:18-37; Is 36:2-22) and Hezekiah’s repentance (2Ch 32:20; 2Ki 19:14-20; Is 37:14-22). No nation until that time had been able to resist the Assyrians, yet Jerusalem, the isolated capital of a second-rate power, had managed to survive where all others had failed. Jerusalem was not delivered because of its military strength or its alliances, but because of God. This may be a portent of the Return of the Messiah (Zec 14:2-3). When the hordes attack Jerusalem, in this case the Assyrians, their plans for victory will be useless. The Septuagint reads, “And the wealth of all the nations together, as many as have fought against Ariel, and all they that war against Jerusalem, and all who are gathered against her, and they that distress her, shall be as one that dreams in sleep by night.”

<sup>k</sup> (8) The lust for conquest of these nations is as likely to be satisfied as a man’s desire for food and drink can be satisfied from a dream (Ps 73:20, 90:5). The Assyrian army is made up of units from the nations they have conquered. At the end of the day, all those who fight against Jerusalem shall be frustrated (Is 54:17). The Septuagint reads, “And as men drink and eat in sleep, and when they have arisen, the dream is vain. And as a thirsty man dreams as if he drank, and having arisen is still thirsty, and his soul has desired in vain, so shall be the wealth of all the nations, as many as have fought against Mount Zion.”

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<sup>l</sup> (9) In verses 9-16, and despite their show of piety, Judah's leaders refused to accept the prophet's words of assurance. They rejected prophetic advice (Is 30:10-11), did not consult the prophetic oracles in forming their political plans (Is 30:1-2, 31:1), and tried to hide their plans even from God, or perhaps God's prophet (v. 15 below), who, they thought, simply did not understand military and political reality. And even after praying to God in desperation and being immediately and inexplicably saved from the Assyrians, they did not manifest gratitude toward God or even an understanding that it was God's actions which had defeated the enemy. In this verse 9, the prophets and seers lack the ability to see what God has done, or have blinded themselves, as if they were drunk, even though they were not actually drinking wine (Is 6:9-10, 19:14, 24:20, 28:7-8, 51:17-22, 63:6). This suggests that the imagery of poor leadership drunk in Chapter 28, especially verse 7 may refer to the impairment of their judgment from something other than wine. The Hebrew includes alliteration in the phrases, "Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk. . ." (הִתְמַהְמְהוּ וְתִמְהוּ הַשְׁתַּעֲשׂוּ וְשִׁעוּ שָׁכְרוּ) Blindness is a common metaphor for religious error for Isaiah, the other prophets and also in the Messianic Writings (Is 6:10, 35:5, 42:16, 43:8; Zep 1:17; Mt 13:15-16, 15:14; Jn 9:1-41, 12:39-40, 14:16-20; 2Co 3:16, 4:3-4; 1Jn 2:10). The Hebrew for "stagger" (נִוַּע, *nuwa'*) has a meaning closer to "waiver" as in being unable to make a decision. The Septuagint reads, "Faint, and be amazed, and be overpowered, not with strong drink, nor with wine."

<sup>m</sup> (10) God has taken away the ability of the prophets and seers (another term for prophet, 1Sm 9:9) to prophesy and see visions. A spiritual blindness comes upon the people of Jerusalem. Some other translations imply that the prophets blind themselves. Although not entirely clear, the Hebrew appears to follow the Septuagint and show God being the moving cause of the blindness and has hardened the hearts of those who should be the first to see God's actions and explaining them to the people (Ps 69:23; Is 44:18; Mi 3:6; Rm 11:8; 2Th 2:9-12). In all events, Isaiah was told that this would be the reaction of the people (Is 6:9-10), and their ability to see the truth was removed (Jn 9:40-41). There is a risk of preaching to those whose hearts have been hardened, who do not want to understand or believe. They may harden their hearts even further so that they may never be able to come to the Lord. Jhan's experience in evangelizing Jews over more than 30 years was that he could not argue them into faith, and that no apologetic could cut through a determination not to believe. The Septuagint reads, "For the Lord has made you to drink a spirit of deep sleep; and He shall close their eyes, and the eyes of their prophets and of their rulers, who see secret things."

<sup>n</sup> (11) The Image here is of a written prophecy in the form of a sealed book which even the learned cannot, or will not, read because it is sealed (Is 8:16; Dn 12:4-9; Mt 13:11; Rv 5:1-3).

<sup>o</sup> (12) The same book from v. 11, if given to an unlearned man, could not be read by him even if unsealed because he does not know how to read. Isaiah is here emphasizing that the spiritual blindness is deep, and voluntary, on the part of the people of Jerusalem. Those who can read could unseal the book. Those who cannot read could give it to someone who could read. But instead they make excuses for not reading or understanding. Isaiah has already been told that this people will not believe (Is 6:9-13). God will invite people to believe, and wants all to repent and come to the knowledge of God (1Tm 2:4; 2Pt 3:9), but will not force people to believe. C.S. Lewis said, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. Those who knock it is opened."

<sup>p</sup> Lord (אֲדֹנָי, *Adonai*).

<sup>q</sup> (13) God says that the people of Jerusalem may worship with their tongues, that is outward religious conduct, but they have not given their hearts to the Lord (Is 1:10-20, 58:2-3; Am 5:21-23; Jr 2:27; Ezk 33:31; Mi 6:6-8; Jn 9:31; Col 2:20-22). Jesus quoted this verse, likely from the Septuagint version, to expose the hypocritical recitation of religious formulae (Mt 15:8-9; Mk 7:6-7). We should strive to make both our words and hearts, as well as our actions, reflect the Lord (Ps 19:14; Jn 4:23-24). In the Reformed *Heidelberg Catechism*, (1562) Question 91, it is said that good works are ". . . [O]NLY THOSE WHICH ARE DONE OUT OF TRUE FAITH, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW OF GOD, AND FOR HIS GLORY, AND NOT THOSE BASED ON OUR OWN OPINION OR ON THE TRADITIONS OF MEN." The Reformed *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) Article XVIII, Sec. 2 writing of good works commanded by God states, in part, "THESE GOOD WORKS, DONE IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, ARE THE FRUITS AND EVIDENCES OF A TRUE AND LIVELY FAITH: AND BY THEM BELIEVERS MANIFEST THEIR THANKFULNESS, STRENGTHEN THEIR ASSURANCE, EDIFY THEIR BRETHREN, ADORN THE PROFESSION OF THE GOSPEL, STOP THE MOUTHS OF ADVERSARIES, AND GLORIFY GOD, WHOSE WORKMANSHIP THEY ARE, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS THEREUNTO, THAT, HAVING THEIR FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS, THEY MAY HAVE THE END, ETERNAL LIFE." The Septuagint reads, "And the Lord has said, This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and they honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; and in vain do they worship Me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men."

<sup>r</sup> (14) Because they have not given their heart to the Lord (Is 65:7), God will do a **marvelous** (פִּלְאָה, *pala*) work or wonder (both singular in the Hebrew) (compare with strange or foreign (זָרָה, *zuvr*) in Is 28:21; work (פִּעַל, *pa'al*) in Hab 1:5; and deed in Ac 13:41 which quotes Hab 1:5) with the people of Jerusalem, perhaps by silencing their false prophets and confounding the wise (Is

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3:1-4, 6:9-10, 44:24-25; Jr 8:9, 49:7; Ob 1:8). Miracles are signs of God's blessings. Paul cites the second half of this verse in order to demonstrate the folly of the world's wisdom (1Co 1:19). In Isaiah's day, when the people of Jerusalem saw the approaching Assyrian army, they, in the common wisdom, sought an alliance with Egypt (Is 30:1-3). Isaiah is telling them to rely on God rather than strength of arms (Is 31:1). Some commentators have interpreted the marvelous work as being similar to the strange work of Is 28:21, the punishment that Assyria will bring to Judah. Jhan believes that this verse points to the Messiah. God had chastened Jerusalem through the Assyrians, and will do so again through the Babylonians, but in the end it will do no permanent good. So God must do a new, marvelous thing, and send His Son to die on a cross to redeem Israel (Is 43:19-44:8). He has just redeemed Jerusalem physically from the Assyrians. When He does this new thing, He will redeem all Israel, and indeed all mankind, spiritually. He will change our hearts. The Septuagint reads, "Therefore behold, I will proceed to remove this people, and I will remove them; and I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will hide the understanding of the prudent."

<sup>s</sup> Lord (יהוה; *Yahovah* though usually unpronounced by Jews) here and in verses 19 and 22.

<sup>t</sup> (15) The leaders of Judah thought they could hide their plans, for an alliance with Egypt, from the Lord (Ps 10:4, 10:11-13, 94:7, 139:1-24; Is 28:15, 30:1-2, 31:1, 47:10, 57:12; Jb 22:13, 24:15; Ezk 8:12; Jn 3:19-20), but instead will come to woe (Mal 2:17; Hos 7:13). Those who sin in the open fear neither God nor man. Those who sin in secret fear men but do not fear God thinking there is no God who can see what is done in secret (Pr 28:13; Ezk 8:12; Mt 6:4-6; Jn 3:20). The Septuagint reads, "Woe to them that deepen their counsel, and not by the Lord. Woe to them that take secret counsel, and whose works are in darkness, and they say, who has seen us? And who shall know us, or what we do?"

<sup>u</sup> (16) This imagery harkens back to God fashioning Adam from the mud (Gn 2:7, 3:19). For the clay to command the potter is to turn things upside down, and to reverse creator and creation (Is 10:15, 41:25, 45:9, 64:7-8; Jr 18:1-6; Wis 12:12; Sir 33:13; Rm 9:19-21). Isaiah is saying that the people of Jerusalem want to consider themselves the equal of God (Gn 3:1-5, 11:4-6). The Septuagint reads, "Shall you not be counted as clay of the potter? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, You did not form me? Or the work to the maker, You have not made me wisely?"

<sup>v</sup> (17) In verses 17-24 the prophet presents the positive aspects of God's plan in terms of a series of reversals: an end to pride, ignorance, and injustice (Is 32:3-5) and an end to this spiritual blindness that had infected Jerusalem. This is another description of the millennial blessing, a time when the Messiah shall rule. The interpretation of this verse 17 is debated. Some translations see this as a blessing that will come to Lebanon (Ps 84:6, 107:33-35; Is 32:15), while others that Lebanon will soon be humiliated (Is 2:13, 10:34, 37:24). The Hebrew, as well as the context, seem to support the former interpretation. The Septuagint reads, "Is it not yet a little while, and Lebanon shall be changed as the mountains of Carmel, and Carmel shall be reckoned as a forest?"

<sup>w</sup> (18) Whereas, before, vs. 11-12, the book could not be read because it was sealed, or because the person holding the book could not read, or because the Lord had rendered them deaf or blind (Is 42:18-19, 43:8) *on that day* the deaf will be able to hear the book read and the blind will be able to read it (Is 32:3, 35:5, 42:6-7; Pr 20:12). Jesus quotes vs 18-19 as evidence of His ministry (Mt 11:5; Mk 7:37, 11:5). We should also seek God's wisdom (Ps 119:18). The Septuagint for vs. 18-19 reads, "And in that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and they that are in darkness, and they that are in mist; the eyes of the blind shall see, and the poor shall rejoice with joy because of the Lord, and they that had no hope among men shall be filled with joy."

<sup>x</sup> (19) The joy of the humble will be increased in the Lord (Ps 37:11; Zep 3:12), and the poor shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel (Is 6:3, 25:4, 26:6, 61:1-2; Lk 4:17-21; Mt 5:3-5; Jas 1:9, 2:5). They will experience new things that will bring them joy (Ps 25:9). In the Day of the Lord, the wisdom and values of the world will be turned upside down (Is 3:14-15, 14:30-32) and replaced by the wisdom and values of the Kingdom (1Sm 2:5-10; Is 11:4).

<sup>y</sup> (20) The proud people are described in greater detail as depriving the poor and innocent of justice. They will be cut off from God's people (Is 28:14, 28:22, 29:5; Mi 2:1). The Prophet Isaiah addresses this perversion of the Law elsewhere (Is 1:17, 5:7-8, 54:9). The *Lutheran Smalcald Articles* (1537), Article III, Sec. 2, addressing monastic institutions, states in part, "IF THESE INSTITUTIONS WILL NOT SERVE THIS PURPOSE [TO PREPARE EDUCATED MEN FOR THE MINISTRY AND SECULAR GOVERNMENT], IT IS BETTER TO ABANDON THEM OR TEAR THEM DOWN THAN HAVE THEIR BLASPHEMOUS, HUMANLY INVENTED SERVICES REGARDED AS SOMETHING BETTER THAN THE ORDINARY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE OFFICES AND CALLINGS ORDAINED BY GOD. THIS TOO IS CONTRARY TO THE CHIEF ARTICLE ON THE REDEMPTION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. LIKE ALL OTHER HUMAN INVENTIONS, THESE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN COMMANDED [BY SCRIPTURE]. THEY ARE NEEDLESS AND USELESS. THEY ARE ALSO OCCASIONS FOR DANGEROUS ANNOYANCES AND EMPTY WORKS (ISAIAH 29:20) . . ." The Septuagint reads, "The lawless man has been brought down, and the proud man has perished, and they that transgress mischievously have been utterly destroyed . . ."

<sup>z</sup> (21) False testimony or judgment wrongly convicts the innocent and helpless (Is 5:22-23, 10:1-2, 32:7; Am 5:10-15). The leaders oppress anyone who speaks up against them. This remains a problem in any human system of justice, and for those who are part of that system. But in that day, the corrupt judges will be gone, the shyster lawyers silenced and the lying witnesses sent

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away. The Septuagint reads, “. . . and they that cause men to sin by a word; and men shall make all that reprove in the gates an offense, because they have unjustly turned aside the righteous.”

<sup>aa</sup> (22) God redeemed Abraham, perhaps by revealing himself and delivering Abraham from idolatrous worship (Gn 12:1–3; 17:1; Jos 24:2–3) or by providing him with descendants though he was an old man (Gn 15:5, 22:17; Is 51:2). Abraham’s redemption was his exodus from his homeland, Ur, and away from the idols and false gods of his fathers (Jsh 24:2) to the Promised Land (Gn 15:7). In the same way, God brought Israel out of Egypt to the same Land (Ex 20:1-2). The Images of the Exodus run throughout Isaiah (e.g. Is 12:12, 43:16-17). The face grows pale in fear of the enemy. The Lord, who delivered Abraham, will deliver the humble, and the people of God, from their enemies and establish justice (Is 41:8, 45:17, 49:23, 50:7, 54:4, 63:16). It is not usual for Isaiah to talk of the “House of Jacob” or refer to the past, in this case Abraham. But here Abraham and Jacob are told that they will not need to be ashamed for their descendants, because their spiritual blindness will be removed. The Septuagint reads, “Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the house of Jacob, whom He set apart from Abraham, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall he now change his countenance.”

<sup>bb</sup> (23) The Hebrew here is difficult but it likely means that the redeemed people of God will honor Him by living in His ways (Ex 20:7; Is 26:12; Eph 2:10). This change may be set in motion when the Jewish people see many gentiles, the work of God’s hand (Ps 100:3; Is 45:11), come to the Lord (Is 19:24-25, 49:20-26; Rm 11:11-15, 11:33-12:1). Both Jew and gentile will, in the end, come to the Holy One of Israel, the God of Abraham (Pr 1:7; Jb 28:28; Is 5:16, 8:12-13, 60:20). The Septuagint reads, “But when their children shall have seen My works, they shall sanctify My name for My sake, and they sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.”

<sup>cc</sup> (24) Those who **go astray in spirit** are those who have drifted from faith and good practice, but will return through God’s grace through faith in the Messiah (Is 30:21, 60:16; Zec 12:10; Lk 7:47, 15:17-19; Ac 2:37; 1Co 6:11; 1Tm 1:13-15). The worst sinners, rather than the arrogant Pharisees, may be the ones who come to God as they see and repent from the sins (Mt 21:28-32). Some who spoke against God or engaged in other religious practices contrary to God will seek God’s truth and be answered (Is 30:21, 54:13, 60:16; Ac 6:7). In that Day, even those who reject teaching, and whose hearts have been hardened, will be teachable. This represents a time when God’s Grace will keep us in faith (Is 41:19-20; Heb 5:2). The Septuagint reads, “And they that erred in spirit shall know understanding, and the murmurers shall learn obedience, and the stammering tongues shall learn to speak peace.”