

Series: Isaiah
Title: A Marvellous Work and a Wonder
Text: Isaiah 29:1-24
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Every rebellious act of man has been used of God to serve his purpose in glorifying his name and bringing good to his people.

Our text beings "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt!" Ariel is Jerusalem. It was the place God placed the temple and the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, the holy place. There God gave his priests. He appointed the sacrifices. It was the city where David dwelt. But the message Isaiah was sent to declare to Jerusalem was a message of "Woe to Ariel!"

Vv1-6. The wrath of God is upon the city.

The pagan Assyrian army would be the instrument God would use, but notice the LORD God says, "I will..." Point: Judgment is of God's hand. Our God rules absolutely over all men. He is able to send an ungodly host of pagans to do his bidding just as he is sovereign to send pastors after his own heart. This is the sovereign God we all shall stand before in the great day of judgment (Is 28: 22--be not mockers)

Vv7-8. Isaiah declares mercy in the midst of judgment. Mount Zion is God's church in the midst of the multitude. His work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem was to purge his remnant from the vile. The LORD allowed the Assyrian king to go only so far then turned him away hungry and thirsty. Learn from this, brethren, end of v8: ...So shall the multitude of **all nations** be that fight against Zion.

Isaiah 54: 17: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

When the heresy is all played out those who remain will be those--approved of God-- his children, kept by his power and grace.

What was the problem?

I. A FORM OF RELIGION WITHOUT THE POWER OF GOD IN THE HEART IS DEADLY.

Isaiah 28: 13: Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me...

A. Our Lord is not talking about irreligious people, but very religious folks.

These are not folks in heathen nations but in Jerusalem, in the Lord's courts. These are not folks running away but drawing near. These are not folks saying evil things but speaking honorable things. Here is the problem...

Isaiah 28: 13:...but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

In our Lord's day: the most religious men refused Christ in favor of men's precepts.

Mark 7: 5: Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? 6: He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7: Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

They appeared to worship God outwardly. They pretended to listen to God's true prophet. But secretly they sought to save themselves by their own wisdom and their own way (**Is 30: 1-2.**)

Isaiah 29: 15: Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Note: They would not draw near with their heart, but God knew their heart.

Isaiah 29: 16: Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Professing themselves to be wise they became fools. They served and worshipped the creature more than the Creator.

B. The LORD turned them over to a reprobate mind. (vv9-12.)

John said, "They believed not"--"therefore they could not believe." A form of religion without a work of grace in the heart is deadly.

II. A MARVELLOUS WORK AND A WONDER

Isaiah 29: 14: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder:

Isaiah uses this same Hebrew word:

Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Read Isaiah 28: 21.

A. STRANGE WORK IN MT. PERAZIM

2 Samuel 5: 17: But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

The Philistines represent all the enemies of God--the wise and prudent of this world. King David is a type of King Jesus. When Christ was born the reaction was the same:

Matthew 2:2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3: When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

When the people refused to walk in the light he gave them, the Lord poured out this deep sleep upon them so that their table became a snare and a stumbling block. They rejected Christ and nailed him to a tree. All perfectly fulfilling what God had determined before to be done--what a strange work!

2 Samuel 5: 18: The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. 19: And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. 20: And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.

On Mt. Calvary, Christ the King faced the enemy head on...Christ conquered our enemies willingly submitting himself to bear the overflowing judgment of God.

2 Co 5:21: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—that is God's strange work!

The just God poured out his wrath on his Son instead of on his people. Christ Jesus cried out, "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?"—what a strange work!

2 Samuel 5: 21: And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

This was the law of God. Christ fulfilled the law. "The breach" was made of God in Christ, the wall that separated God from his elect was broken down when Christ cried out "it is finished! The temple veil rent in two...the law is fulfilled, he has redeemed his people from the curse that Adam brought us under--our King has won the victory over all his enemies--declaring God just and the Justifier of all who believe, mercy and truth met together--what a strange work!

THE STRANGE ACT IN THE VALLEY OF GIBEON--or Geba.

2 Samuel 5: 22: And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

After our Lord was crucified the religious multitude spread themselves at Jerusalem, continuing in their form of religion.

2 Samuel 5: 23: And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. 24: And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

Just before our Lord ascended to the Father, he told his disciples that they would be witnesses of him, "in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." But he told them to wait, like as the Lord told David to wait for "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees."--what a strange act!

Acts 2: 2: And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3: And there appeared unto them cloven

tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

2 Samuel 5: 25: And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba [Gibeon] until thou come to Gazer.

On the day of Pentecost, by this strange act, three thousand who were “enemies in their minds by wicked works” were slain and made alive by the two-edged gospel sword that day, and through his witnesses, through the Holy Spirit, our Lord has been going forth conquering and to conquer from Jerusalem all the way into the uttermost parts of the earth ever since--what a strange act!

But there is another aspect to this act that is strange.

Isaiah 29: 14: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

I Corinthians 1: 18-24

This gospel which is a savor of life unto life to some is a savor of death unto death to others--what a strange act!

Romans 11: 7: What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded 8: (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

III. This marvelous work and a wonder includes great mercy toward God's elect Gentiles, as well (v17-24)

Isaiah 29: 17: Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

Lebanon, represents the Gentile world. It had been a forest and Jerusalem a fruitful field. Now, God promises Jerusalem shall be an uncultivated forest and the Gentile world a fruitful field.

A. Who are God's elect?

Isaiah 29: 18: And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. 19: The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. 20: For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: 21: That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Notice the difference between God's true children and the falsely religious man:

The sinner saved by grace is meek—terrible ones (violent), scorners. The believer is poor in spirit—self-righteous watch for iniquity, make a man an offender for a word. The believer joys in the LORD, rejoices in the Holy One of Israel— enemies lay a snare for him [Christ] that reproveth

them, turn aside the just for a thing of nought; the meek and poor shall increase—those with a mere form “cut off.”

Isaiah 29: 22: Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. 23: But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

The house of Jacob is made up of Jew and Gentile, chosen, redeemed, sanctified and made to believe on the Holy One Christ Jesus the Lord and to fear the God of Israel. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, rich or poor, male or female but we are all one by faith in Christ.

God's elect people shall be chastened in order for God to separate his wheat from the chaff, those righteousness in Christ from the vile. But we shall not be ashamed. We shall see the work of God's hands in our midst and rejoice in what great things our God has done.

Application: 2 Thess 2: 10:...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15: Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. 16: Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17: Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

AMEN!