

Isaiah 29 The Lord Contends against Worldly Wisdom

Because worldly wisdom blinds God's people to the true glory of God, the Lord contends against worldly wisdom.

1. God distresses to discipline, not to destroy His Church (vv. 1-8).

- a. God distresses His Church . . .
 - i. "Ariel"="hearth of God," or "altar,"=God's special regard for the people of Jerusalem (vv. 1, 2, 7).
 - ii. "The city where David encamped" (v. 1) associates it positively with David
 - iii. "I will distress Ariel"— God's displeasure with the condition of His people (v. 2).
 1. "Let the feasts run their round. Yet I will distress . . ." (vv. 1-2) Worship not accepted because merely external (cf. v. 13)
 2. "Moaning and lamentation" (v. 2) displace the air of celebration around the "altar" (Ariel). Why?
 3. Because, "I will encamp against you all around" (v. 3).
 - iv. God's purpose to humble His people (v. 4): "brought low" "from the earth" "from the dust" "the voice of a ghost"= Jerusalem's humiliation; but not for annihilation
- b. . . . to discipline, not to destroy.
 - i. Vv. 5-8—God's determination to redeem His people "Your foreign foes shall be like small dust . . . passing chaff" (v. 5).
 - ii. "The nations that fight against Ariel . . . shall be like a dream" (v. 7).
- c. salvation through judgment

2. God destroys the worldly wise by their own dark delusions (vv. 9-16).

- a. V. 9—human responsibility: "Astonish yourselves . . . blind yourselves . . . be drunk . . . stagger."
- b. V. 10—Divine sovereignty: "The LORD has poured upon you a spirit of deep sleep . . . has closed your eyes . . . and covered your heads." (cf. Rom 11:8)
- c. The Word of God is a sealed book to those who rely on worldly wisdom (vv. 11-12).
- d. What do the worldly wise look like? The worldly wise . . .
 - i. . . . worship God with lip-service (v. 13a).
 - ii. . . . worship God with human invention (v. 13b; cf. Matt 15:1-9).
 - iii. . . . exclude God from their plans (v. 15).
 - iv. . . . fashion God in their own image (v. 16).
- e. God destroys worldly wisdom (v. 14; cf. 1 Cor 1:19).

3. God delivers His humbled people by His light of truth (vv. 17-24).

- a. New Creational language (vv. 17-19): "turned into a fruitful field . . . regarded as a forest. . . the deaf shall hear . . . blind shall see . . . meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD . . . poor shall exult in the Holy One of Israel." (cf. Matt 11:5)
- b. "The ruthless," "the scoffer," and "all who watch to do evil" are cut off (vv. 20-21).

- c. Abraham and Jacob (v. 22)=all of God's people as one redeemed people. The redeemed are delivered from . . .
 - i. . . . shame to the true glory of worship (vv. 22-23);
 - ii. . . . straying to gain understanding (v. 24a);
 - iii. . . . confusion to gain instruction (v. 24b).
- d. In union with Christ we have a new pattern for living—wisdom from God (1 Cor 1:18-31).
 - i. God-centered humility that promotes peace in Christ's Church (1 Cor 2-4)
 - ii. God-centered purity that promotes holiness in relationships (1 Cor 5-7)
 - iii. God-centered liberty that promotes pure conscience (1 Cor 8-10)
 - iv. God-centered love that promotes edifying ministry (1 Cor 11-14, 16)
 - v. God-centered hope that promotes steadfastness (1 Cor 15)