

# Discipline and Blessing Part 1

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and the consequences of unbelief, highlighting God's judgment on those who turn away from Him and miss out on His blessings.*

**Duration:** 25:04

**Scripture:** Psalm 73:11, Isaiah 29:1, Isaiah 29:14, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 15:8, Romans 4:18-21

**Topics:** "Blessing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the desperate times we are living in and the need for people to turn to God. He highlights the serious social and moral problems we are facing and the spiritual deterioration that is occurring. The preacher also discusses the lack of understanding and faith in the Word of God, causing people to stagger at His promises. He warns of the consequences of forsaking God and the impending destruction that will come upon Jerusalem. The sermon concludes with a call to wonder and cry out to God, as the people have been spiritually asleep and blinded to the truth.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit and His love Will descend upon your life And  
make you whole And now with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. Ariel means the Lion of God. It is a  
reference to the city of Jerusalem and the 29th chapter begins with a woe, a warning.

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel the city where David dwelt. There was David's palace, his headquarters. Add ye year  
to year, let them kill sacrifices unto the Lord.

And yet the Lord said, I will distress Ariel And there shall be heaviness and sorrow And it shall be unto me  
as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about And I will lay siege against thee with a mount And I will  
raise forts against thee And thou shall be brought down And shall speak out of the ground And thy speech  
shall be low out of the dust And thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit Out of the ground and  
thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. And so God speaks about His coming against Jerusalem.

And the reason of course being that they have turned from God. And the prophecy is of the future of  
people who have turned their back upon their God. From the time of Hezekiah who was now reigning  
there was a surface revival.

It didn't really go deep enough. It was just something on the surface. At the death of Hezekiah the nation of Judah plunged to its deepest depths of depravity from which it never fully recovered.

And so it was a downhill direction from this time on as God having been forsaken of the people has now forsaken the people. As Jeremiah will say Israel or the people of God have committed two evils. They have number one forsaken the fountain of living waters and they have hewn out cisterns that could hold no water.

They have forsaken the living God, life. And they had tried to substitute faith in the living God with philosophies with other chief interest in life that became their gods. And as a result God Himself turned against them.

He said to the king Asa the Lord is with you while you will be with Him and if you seek Him He'll be found of you but if you forsake Him He will forsake you. This is always true. If you seek God you'll find God.

If you forsake God you will be forsaken of God as you are in a position of either waiting on God trusting in God or you're in that other position of God waiting on you until you hit bottom until you cry out for help. And so God speaks of the woe that is going to come upon Jerusalem as God will camp against them will lay a siege against them and they will be brought down and speak out of the ground and speaking incoherently like a person who is possessed of an evil spirit. And then in verse 5 there's a dramatic change.

As God speaks of the way that He is going to destroy their enemies moreover the multitude of thy strangers or enemies shall be like small dust and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as the chaff that passes away yea it shall be at an instant suddenly. So God is going to come against those who come against Jerusalem. And this prophecy I believe actually moves on in to the time of the end to the time really of the Antichrist as God speaks about how He is going to destroy those that have come against Jerusalem.

Instant destruction. Thou shall be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder. He's talking now about the enemies of Jerusalem.

With an earthquake and a great noise with a storm and a tempest and the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel even all that fight against her and her fortifications that distress her shall be as a dream of the night vision. It will be like a hungry man who is dreaming and in his dream he's eating but when he wakes up he's still hungry.

Or he's thirsty and he dreams that he's taking a drink of water but when he wakes up he's still thirsty. And so shall it be for those that come against Jerusalem he is faint his soul hath appetite and so shall the multitude of all nations be that fight against Mount Zion. Now God speaks of the effect of this vision as Isaiah declares it to the people.

They're wondering as he talks about God's destruction of their enemies and God's defending of them they are wondering and he says stay yourselves and wonder. Cry you out and cry. They are drunken but not with wine they stagger but not with strong drink.

For the Lord has poured upon you the spirit of a deep sleep and hath closed your eyes the prophets and your rulers and the seers has he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed. So he speaks of the condition of the people he tells them what God is going to do they stand there not really understanding standing in awe and they sort of staggering in a sense at the

promises of God.

You remember in the fourth chapter of Romans as Paul is talking about being justified by faith apart from works and he gives Abraham as the example who believed God and God encountered his faith for righteousness. And then he goes on to tell us concerning the faith of Abraham and he tells us that who against hope believed in hope and he did not consider his own age being about a hundred years old nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb and he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. The Bible tells us that God has given to us exceeding rich and precious promises that by these we may be my partakers of the divine inheritance but there are a lot of times when we find ourselves staggering at the promises of God sort of like the servant of the king in Elisha's day when the king of Samaria was distressed because of the sore famine as the result of the Syrian army having besieged the city.

It had come to the point where they were beginning to cannibalize. They were desperate and the king in his twisted logic was blaming the prophet of God for all of their problems and so he sent his servant down to the house of Elisha to take him as a prisoner to bring him to the king that he might put Elisha to death. Now Elisha was a fellow who had very keen insight into the realm of the spirit.

Great spiritual discernment. And as he was sitting there with his friends he suddenly probably got sort of a look in his eye that his friends recognized. Well, you know, wonder what's going on.

And he got that look and he says look what that son of a murderer is planning to do now. He's sending a guy down here to get me. He said when he knocks on the door open the door and pin him with the door for behold the footsteps of his master is right behind him.

So there was a knock on the door and Elisha's friends opened it and pinned the guy against the door. And here came the king riding up with his prime minister and he said I finally caught up with you. You've troubled Israel long enough.

And Elisha said let's get this straight. You're the one that's troubled Israel. You're the one who's led them into idolatry.

You're the one who has turned them away from God. That's their problem. But don't worry.

Tomorrow in the gate of Samaria they'll be selling a bushel of corn and a bushel of fine flour for 65 cents. And this prime minister on whom the king leaned said if God would open the windows of heaven could such a thing be? He was staggering at the promises of God. Now the reason why we stagger at the promises of God is because of a lack of faith.

Because we cannot in our minds figure out how God can do it. And the guy couldn't figure out how God could do that. How would it be possible that they could be selling a bushel of fine flour for 65 cents? A jawbone of a donkey is selling for 65 pieces of silver.

So people can cook up some soup. But a bushel? Oh come on. What's God going to do? Open the windows of heaven and dump flour down on us? So Elisha said well man you'll see it but you won't eat it.

God is going to do it whether you believe it or not. But you won't partake of it. But your unbelief will keep you from partaking of the blessing and the goodness of God.

And that's always a tragedy. God is going to do His work. Believe it or not.

But many times your unbelief will cost you the privilege and the opportunity of partaking in that work of God. And so these people hearing the promise of Isaiah staggered. They staggered at the promises of God.

Could such a thing be? How can that ever be? They were aware of the Assyrian power that they were facing. They had heard of the fall of Samaria to Assyria. And they were fearful.

And they were trying to figure out every possible way to deliver themselves from the hands of the Assyrians. And they realized that it was almost hopeless. And so hear the promise of God that He's going to really wipe out their enemies.

And they are staggering. And so He said the Lord has poured out on you this spirit of deep sleep. That is a spiritual lethargy where you cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit.

Now the Bible tells us that the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit and neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned. And there are many people who are spiritual dunces. I mean they can talk to you about the economic situation and how terrible it is.

And they can give you their solution to all of the problems that we have here in the United States. And if they were only in the position of the President they could have things rolling again, you know. And they've got things all analyzed and doped up.

But you get into the realm of spiritual issues and they're duh, you know, there's nothing there. They have no comprehension. They cannot see.

And God spoke of the condition of the people. Having eyes to see, they cannot see. Ears to hear, they cannot hear.

And it's just a dullness to the things of the Spirit. And so here the people are with this spirit of deep sleep in spiritual matters. God has closed your eyes.

And even those of the prophets, your rulers and the seers He has covered. The people are going around in this false hope, in this blindness. They cannot see what's going on.

And I wonder today if we really are seeing what's really happening in the moral degeneration of our nation. Can we perceive what has really happened to our nation? I don't see an alarm. I don't see a deep concern.

I don't see people really gathering together and saying, let's have more prayer. Let's gather together during the week. And really get serious about these things.

And the time has come when the people of God need to get desperate before God because we are living in very desperate times. When are we going to realize that, hey, we're in trouble. We've got some serious social problems that we're facing.

And there's a tremendous deterioration from a spiritual standpoint and a moral standpoint. We're going down the tubes fast. There seems to be this lethargy, a deep sleep, while this moral evil just seems to, like fog, come in and engulf us.

And we're concerned about who's going to win the World Series or the Super Bowl. The vision of God has become like a book that is sealed. The Word of God is something that they just don't understand.

They hand it to a man who has learned. And they say, read this to me, I pray you. And he said, I can't read that, that's sealed.

It's an interesting thing that so many of the pulpits, and I would venture to say the majority of the pulpits, the ministers treat the Bible as though it was a sealed book. Then why do they call it the unsealed? The apocalypse? The unveiling? Rather than being sealed, just the opposite. It's an unveiling.

It's taking the veil off, it's not putting the veil over. There's only one part of the book of Revelation that was sealed, and that is when the seven thunders, there are thunders and John started writing, he said, seal that up, that's not to be revealed. But that's the only part of the book that's sealed.

And yet they won't venture to touch the book. And so you hand it to the learned, you say, read this. Oh, I can't read that, that's a sealed book.

And they say, you shouldn't try to read the Bible. You're not a scholar. Only the scholars can understand the Bible.

And this blindness. And so the book is delivered to him who is not learned. And they say, read this to me.

I haven't studied it, man, I don't know it. I can't read it. Wherefore the Lord said, for as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.

It isn't a genuine fear of God. They're taught, well, you should fear God, so they fold their hands and close their eyes when they pray. But it isn't a true reverence of God from their hearts.

And so he speaks of these people, and these are the people who are in the temple worshipping. They draw near with their lips. Now, this is where we are in danger.

We're in the house of God, worshipping God, and through our singing we were drawing near with our lips, but where is our heart? That's the important issue. They were drawing near with their lips, but their heart was far from him. Therefore, because of this, God said, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among the people.

A work that will cause them to wonder. For the wisdom of the wise men shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid. 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? In the 73rd Psalm, Asaph the psalmist speaks of those who turned against God and blasphemed God. And he said, They say, How doth God know? Is there wisdom in the Most High? And this is what Isaiah is quoting them as saying here. They think that they are hiding from God.

They think that they are getting by with their evil. They do not realize, as Paul said, in Him we live and we move and we have our being. And we'll be looking at that passage of Scripture in chapter 33 of Isaiah, where he talks about when God destroyed the Assyrians, as he promised to do.

When he destroyed the Assyrian army, he said, Fear gripped the hearts of the sinners in Zion. They were terrified. For they saw what the power of God could do to the enemies of God.

And they said, Who amongst us can dwell in the midst of this devouring fire? They saw God like a devouring fire. They saw it destroy and devour the Assyrian army. And they said, Whoa, man! Who amongst us can dwell in the midst of this kind of holiness and purity, this devouring fire of God? They came to the realization that God as a fire is everywhere.

You can't escape Him. It wasn't who of us can run from this devouring fire. You can't run from it.

You are in the fire. The question is, what is it doing to you? And so this awareness of the presence of God, I need to have that consciousness of God's presence. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse venture through the Bible in our next broadcast, as Pastor Chuck continues to guide us through the fascinating book of Isaiah.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Isaiah chapter 29, verse 1 when visiting [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org). And while you're there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription.

Once again, all this can be found at [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org). If you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD and our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Again, that's 1-800-272-9673. For those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628.

And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today.

And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing prayer. Father, we thank you for the words of wisdom, instruction in righteousness and in truth and in equity. May we walk, Lord, in that righteousness and in that truth.

May we incline our hearts to understanding, to knowledge and to wisdom and that we might, Lord, receive the rewards of the righteous. In Jesus' name, amen. The Word for Today I'd like to tell you about a book written by Chuck Smith entitled Living Water.

In this book, Pastor Chuck explains how God has the power to change your life through His Holy Spirit. This book will help you to understand how the Holy Spirit works in your life covering such topics as who is the Holy Spirit, what does the Holy Spirit do, what are the gifts of the Spirit, and how should I respond. It's Pastor Chuck's desire that by God's grace and through this book, the Lord will develop in you a hunger and thirst for the things after the Spirit that will help you come into a deep and personal relationship with Him so that your life will be transformed.

To find out more and to read a book preview, visit [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) and click on the link to download Living Water by Chuck Smith. Or, if you would like to order this book in print, call The Word for Today at 800-272-WORD. That's 800-272-9673.

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