

# (The Word for Today) Isaiah 29:1 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon highlights the importance of understanding God's promises and the consequences of spiritual lethargy, as seen in the context of Isaiah 29.*

**Duration:** 25:59

**Scripture:** Isaiah 29:1, Matthew 15:8, Matthew 23:23, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:42, 2 Timothy 3:7, Hebrews 12:29

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the importance of not just going through the motions of worship, but truly drawing near to God with our hearts. He emphasizes the need to remember the true meaning of Christmas and not get caught up in the busyness of the season. Pastor Smith also highlights the spiritual condition of the world and the need for people to wake up and recognize the moral decay and social problems we are facing. He calls for a sense of urgency and desperation in seeking God's help and guidance in these troubled times.

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## Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament, and if you're following along in your Bible, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 29, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled The Woe to Jerusalem.

And now with today's study, 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.

The place where the people would come year by year for the feast, for the offering of 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 shalt be brought down, and shalt 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.

You are in a position of either waiting on God, trusting in God, or you are 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 five, 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 shalt 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. 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, in 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 has 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. Those that stagger, but not with wine.

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. 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 a 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 pin 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? Are you trying to kid? 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. 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 here the promise of God that he's going to really wipe out their enemies and they're staggering. And so he said, the Lord has poured out on you at 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 have all kinds of wisdom.

They know all about the coming Super Bowl and why which team will be in it and who will win. And they've got things all analyzed and doped out. 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 and 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? You know I think that we're really going down the tubes fast. But I think people are sleeping. 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.

Let's get praying you know 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. The Santa Ana City Schools Board is considering now the putting of these sex clinics into the public schools. Dispensing condiments and so forth in our public schools here in Santa Ana.

Planned Parenthood of America is behind the scenes pushing for this. Are we concerned? Do we care? Now it has been proven statistically that wherever Planned Parenthood has gone with their sex education that pregnancies increase. Yet they're giving that whole you know big spiel of you know the kids need to be educated you know.

And so by our education we won't have these little girls getting pregnant anymore. Because we'll teach them how to have sex but safely so they won't get pregnant. I mean rather than teaching the kids purity, morality, save yourself until you're married, be pure.

They say well we'll teach them how to have sex but that how that they can have it safe sex so they won't get pregnant. But it's not working. They're teaching them how to have sex but the kids are ignoring the safety factors.

And pregnancy has gone up 40% everywhere that the Planned Parenthood has put in their sex education clinics. And we said my that's terrible. I think that's a rotten shame.

Where are we going to eat tonight? Should we go to Rubin's you know? I mean we just shrug it it doesn't 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 across America today and in 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.

You ask them do you ever teach on the book of Revelation? Oh no no nobody understands that book. That's a sealed book. It's 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 uttered their their thunders and John started writing. He said seal that up. That's you know 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 has 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. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments but first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or cd. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or cd number c 3255.

Again that's tape or cd number c 3255. Well Christmas time is soon approaching and it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. Buying presents, decorating, cooking, the list grows longer every day.

Without realizing it we can easily forget the true meaning of why we celebrate our Lord's birth. For this reason the word for today would like to present a booklet by Pastor Chuck Smith entitled How Can a Man Be Born Again and also an audio cd entitled Why by Pastor Chuck that would be the perfect compliment for Christmas cards and gifts this year. Both resources share the gospel of Jesus Christ and explain the true meaning of Christmas and why a man born 2,000 years ago can still affect the world today.

And best of all they contain a message leading people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And remember the word for today would like to assist you this Christmas in spreading the gospel of Jesus to your family, friends, and co-workers. Please call our customer service department to help you in finding that perfect gift that will reflect the true meaning of Christmas.

And if you call right now and mention this radio ad the word for today will give you a 20% discount on any resource carried by the word for today. So call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000 Costa Mesa California 92628. Once again that number to call is 1-800-272-9673.

And for those of you that would like to visit our website you can do so at [www.twft.com](http://www.twft.com) or if you would like to email us you can do so at [info@twft.com](mailto:info@twft.com). Well coming up next time on the word for today Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today. And now with a few closing comments here's Pastor Chuck.

Interesting description. We'll be looking at God as a consuming fire in a couple of weeks when we get to chapter 33. And I think you'll find it quite interesting.

We'll take a little more look at it at that time. And now may the Lord be with you and bless you and cause you to be enriched as you walk in fellowship with him this week. May your heart be in tune with his and may your eyes be opened by the Spirit of God.

That those things that concern God will become a concern to you. And may you really commit the issues of your life to him. And may you have that quietness that comes from confidence in God that he is going to work and take care of those things that concern you.

May you just cast all your cares upon him because he does care for you and he is concerned about you. This program is sponsored by the word for today. The radio ministry of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, California.

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