



Rice Memorial MBC

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## Meaningless Worship Condemned

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **June 16, 2013**

**Worship with us** at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,  
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

## Isaiah 29:9-16

**Introduction:** Distress of **Ariel**, or **Jerusalem**, on Sennacherib's invasion, with manifest allusion, however, to the still greater distress which it suffered from the Romans, 1-4. Disappointment and fall of Sennacherib described in terms, like the event, the most awful and terrible, 5-8. Stupidity and hypocrisy of the Jews, 9-16. Rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles, 17. The chapter concludes by a recurrence to the favourite topics of the prophet, viz, the great extension of the **Messiah's kingdom** in the latter days, and the future restoration of Israel, 18-24. (Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/*)

**Isaiah 29:1-8**, Woe to **Ariel**, to **Ariel**, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet 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 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 of one that hath a **familiar spirit**, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as **chaff** that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an **instant suddenly**. Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and 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 munition (fortification), and that **distress** her, shall be as a **dream** of a **night vision**. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

**NOTE:** Isa. 29:8 is a description of the attitude of the cruel invader, already believing that victory belongs to him, and eagerly anticipating his triumph; but he suddenly **wakes up** to **bitter hunger** and **disappointment**.

... The fulfillment of this prophetic promise of the abrupt end of Sennacherib's siege was described by Gleason: Sennacherib was just returning from a great victory in which he defeated the Egyptians at Eltekeh; it was upon his return that he laid siege to Jerusalem; and there God **destroyed 185,000** of his troops on a **single night!**  
(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

**Isaiah 37:15-17, 21-23, 33-38**, And Hezekiah **prayed** unto the Lord, saying, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art **the God**, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all

the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the **living God**.  
 ...Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

...Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of **Assyria**, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For **I will defend** this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Then the **angel** of the Lord went forth, and **smote (kill)** in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So **Sennacherib** king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons **smote (kill)** him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. (*See also 2 Kings 19:21-37*)

**Isaiah 29:9-10, Stay (delay [stop, check ]) yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath **closed** your eyes: the prophets and your **rulers (head)**, the seers hath he covered.**

**NOTE:** Stop a while, pause a little, consider within yourselves the case and circumstances of these people, and wonder at their stupidity. Kimchi thinks these words were spoken in the times of Ahaz, with respect to the men of Judah; and so Aben Ezra says, they are directed to the men of Zion; and it is generally thought that they are spoken to the more religious and sober part of them; though, by the following verse (Isaiah 29:10), it appears that the case was general, and that the people to whom this address is made were as stupid as others: **cry ye out, and cry**; or, "delight yourselves", as in the margin; take your pleasure, indulge yourselves in carnal mirth, gratify your sensual appetite in rioting and wantonness, and then "cry" and lament, as you will have reason to do. Kimchi says, his father rendered the words, "awake yourselves, and awake others"; that is, from that deep sleep they were fallen into, afterwards mentioned: **they are drunken, but not with wine**; not with that only, for otherwise many of them were given to drunkenness in a literal sense, (Isaiah 28:7) but they were like drunken men, as stupid, senseless, and secure, though in the utmost danger: **they stagger, but not with strong drink**; **unsteady** in their counsels and resolutions, in their principles and practices, and stumble in their goings. (*Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/*)

**NOTE:** ...**eyes; the prophets, &c.**--rather, "hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads (Margin; see also Isa 3:2), the seers, He hath covered." The Orientals **cover** the **head to sleep**; thus "covered" is parallel to "closed your eyes" (Jud 4:19). Covering the face was also preparatory to execution (Es 7:8). This cannot apply to the time when Isaiah himself prophesied, but to subsequent (succeeding {later}) times.  
 (*Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/jfb*)

**Isaiah 29:11-12, And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is **sealed**, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is **sealed** (fastened with a seal): And the book is delivered to him that is **not learned**, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.**

**NOTE:** The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is **sealed**, which

men deliver to one who is **literate**, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." Then the book is delivered to one who is **illiterate**, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate."

a. Isaiah likened Jerusalem to the *blind* and to the *drunk*. Now, he likens them to the *illiterate*. But this isn't a literal literacy, because the literate man receives the vision of God, but to him it is **like** a sealed book. When the book of the vision is brought to the **illiterate** man, he does no better (I am not literate).

b. Many today "read" or "receive" God's word like an illiterate man "reads" the newspaper. They can pick out a few words here and there, and they can certainly look at the pictures. They can sit with an open newspaper, enjoy themselves to some degree, and *appear* to be reading. But the **true content** really **escapes them**.

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible [classic.studylight.org/com/guz](http://classic.studylight.org/com/guz))

**Thought 1.** Even though we have the mind of Christ as Christians, which means we are in the best position as humans to be taught by the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us, we too can also be blinded if we're not watchful to receive God's word and obey what we know.

**2 Peter 1:2-10**, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, **giving all diligence (earnestness** [seriousness, intenseness of desire]), **add** to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is **blind**, and **cannot see afar off**, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye **DO these things**, ye shall **never fall...**

**Isaiah 29:13-14**, *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do **honour** me, but have removed their **heart far** from me, and their **FEAR** toward me is taught by the precept of men: 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.*

**Fear defined 3374, REVERENCE** (1. deep respect and esteem (high value) mingled with fear and affection (LOVE). (1913 Webster's) 2. The fear acceptable to God, is a filial [child in relation to his parents] fear, an awful reverence of the divine nature, proceeding from a just esteem [high value] of his perfections [infinite power, holiness, justice, benevolence and wisdom], which produces in us an inclination (leaning of the mind or will) TO his service and an unwillingness to offend him.).

**NOTE:** This paragraph registers still further complaints against Israel. Their religion is not sincere. Sure, they still sing the old songs and **repeat** the **terminology** of worshipping God; but their hearts are simply not in it at all. One cannot avoid the fear that today there must be some worship of God that falls into the pattern of what is condemned here. "Their religion had become a mere formality." Jesus Christ reiterated the thought here in Matt. 15:8, 9; Mark 7:6,7. **Your fear of me is a commandment of men...** (Isaiah 29:13). This describes a situation in which religious teachers had usurped the place of God. Even **morality** is determined and founded upon human opinions, rather than upon the Word of God. This always results in a condition where men dispute and contradict one another, where your word is as good as my word, and

there's no word at all from God! We fear that a great deal of this very philosophy dominates the religious thinking of our very day. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament [classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Mark 7:5-13**, 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? 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. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the **commandments of men**. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well **ye reject** the **commandment** of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to **do ought for** his father or his mother; Making the **word of God of none effect** through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

**Proverbs 14:2**, He that walketh in his uprightness (equity [virtue {impartiality, moral goodness}], **feareth** (reverence) the Lord: but he that is **perverse (turn aside)** in his ways despiseth (refuse to treat with respect) him.

**Thought 1.** There's a song sung by some Christians where they're asking God to, Draw them near. Actually, scripture says if we draw near to him, then, he'll draw near to us.

**James 4:7-10**, Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw nigh** to God, and he will **draw nigh** to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your **hearts (mind)**, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. **Humble yourselves** in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up

**Isaiah 29:15-16**, *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? 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?*

**NOTE:** Isa. 29:15 is an allusion to, "Those secret intrigues (scheme) with Egypt, which were conducted behind Isaiah's back." Cheyne wrote that, "The ruling classes recognized Isaiah's right to advise and direct God's people; but they threw a veil of secrecy over their untheocratic pursuit of **worldly alliances**." Isaiah's words here expose their hypocritical behavior. Another example of the same hypocrisy is that of Ahaz in Isa. 7. The turning of things "upside down" (Isaiah 29:16) is reinforced by the illustration of "the potter and the clay," an analogy used again in Isa. 45:9 and Isa. 64:8, and by Paul in Rom. 9:20. In the 1940's this writer purchased a little booklet published by those in charge of the great telescope installation on Mount Palomar in California. The book described the great 100-inch reflecting telescope. A brief foreword noted that, "With this mighty instrument we seek to gain conscious control of man's evolution"! That represents exactly the same kind of boastful infidelity (disbelief of the inspiration of the Scriptures) that Isaiah rebuked here. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament [classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**1 Corinthians 15:10**, But by the **grace** of God **I am what I am:** and his **grace** which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the **grace** of God which was with me.