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Woe to Those Who Go to Great Depths to Hide Their Plans from the LORD

29: 9-16

Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD DIG: Even though the eleventh-hour defeat of Judah's enemies has been foretold, what effect will these events have on the people (29:9-14)? What will the impact be, specifically, on the prophets and seers? On the uneducated? On the literate? On the wise and intelligent? How do you account for why they are so unable to grasp what Isaiah is saying to them (29:10-13)? Why was God displeased with the worship practices of the people of Judah?

REFLECT: What similar rituals or routines do you see in your church or messianic synagogue? How might Isaiah mock that practice? Which of these traps do you fall into at times? In what ways have you tried to dictate the terms of your relationship with ADONAI? What did the Potter then say to the clay? What else would it take to convince you that the Potter is not just like the clay? Rabbi Saul echoes Isaiah in saying that the wisdom of the wise, which advocates that people find spiritual reality in some other way than Messiah, will perish (First Corinthians 1:19). Have you found Christ to be a more reliable ally in your spiritual life than the other alternatives people turn to? How so? What other ally still seems to appeal to you? Why?

Isaiah suddenly propels us back to **his** own day and **the near historical future** of the southern kingdom of **Judah**. The root cause of **Judah's** troubles was the spiritual blindness of **her** leaders. Spiritual blindness is both self-chosen (**29:9b**) and also a judgment from **God** upon the choice made (**29:10**). It is a pointless, stubborn and careless refusal of the truth (**29:11-12**), and **ADONAI** sees right through **her** hypocrisy (**29:14**).

It is obvious that what **Isaiah** had said about **Judah's** present and future both **stunned and amazed her** rulers (**29:9a**). All the talk about trusting **the LORD**

instead of Egypt and victory through defeat confused **them**. They were not led by **the Spirit**, but **the world (First John 2:15-17)**. To **them**, such talk is **foolishness. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (First Corinthians 2:14)**.

The words of **Isaiah's** call continue to come true. The more **he** spoke the truth, the less the nation of **Judah** understood **him**. So here in agony and frustration, it is as if **he** cried out to them, "Alright, go ahead and be blind, be anesthetized like a **drunk.**" **Blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from beer (29:9b)**. But your problem is **not from** alcohol like those in Samaria (**28:1-7**), your problem comes from **God**. **You** have offended **Him** to the point that **He** no longer allows **you** to hear **Him**. **God** is the one who enables us to hear **His** voice, and if we rebel against **Him** long enough, **He** withdraws **His** enabling grace (see the commentary on **Romans, to see link click [AI](#) - The Evidence Against the Pagan Gentile**).



Interestingly enough it was not the priests who were mainly to blame for **the blindness of the people**. Without doubt **they** were guilty of implying that rituals alone would satisfy **God**. But **the prophets and seers** were really to blame. It was the blind leading the blind into destruction. **They** could have received clear direction from **ADONAI** as **Amos** did (**5:21-24**), but **they** did not. **The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep. He has sealed your eyes with the prophets; He has covered your heads with the seers (29:10)**. This **deep sleep** is a total insensitivity to spiritual things. When King Ahab decided to believe 400 apostate **prophets** who only told **him** what **he** wanted to hear, **ADONAI** allowed a **lying**

spirit, or a **demon**, to speak through **them** as a means of bringing Ahab to **his** death (**First Kings 22:1-38**). If those on whom the nation depends for a word from **God** lose contact with **Him**, that nation is lost like a ship at sea in the fog with no instruments or radio.

The prophets and seers had the technical skills to understand **God's** word, but **they** lacked the spiritual insight that would enable **them** to see the obvious meaning. So of course, the situation was hopeless for the common person. The person **who can read, cannot** be bothered to open the Scriptures and the person **who cannot read** is unconcerned to find **someone who can!** **For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I can't for it is sealed" (29:11).** For those who are educated, it is like the Scriptures are sealed. For those **who** are not educated, **they** are in now hurry to find **someone** to help **them** understand. **Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I don't know how to read" (29:12).** **The people** took **their** lead from **their** leaders and became hypocrites **themselves**.

This applies to us today. If we are far from **God** or deep in sin we will find the Bible is closed. It will be as dry as dust and just as boring. The apostle Paul wrote about this when **he** said: **For the mind controlled by the old nature is hostile to God, because it does not submit to God's Torah - indeed, it cannot (Romans 8:7).** But if we have fallen in love with **the Author** and long to know **Him** better, it is amazing how the Scriptures open up.⁹⁹

The **people** of Jerusalem, professing to know **the LORD**, did not worship **God** from **their** hearts. **They** were mere hypocrites. **ADONAI** says: **These people come near Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me (29:13a).** The hypocrisy of **the people** came from the inability of **their** leaders to interpret the word of **the LORD**. **They** had a pretense of godliness, but in truth, **their hearts** were **far from God**. **Their** offerings and feasts were merely for show. **God** cannot be manipulated or mocked (**Galatians 6:7-8**). No place is this truth stated more plainly than in **Psalm 51:16-17: You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:16-17).**

There is a story about an old village in Spain. **The people** of this village heard the

king planned to visit there. No king had ever done that. So naturally, they became excited and wanted to offer a great celebration that would show their adoration and that would honor the king. But what could a village of such poor people offer? Someone proposed that since so many of the villagers made their own wines - very good wines - they could offer that to please the king. And they each decided that they would all take some of their best wine, and combine them as a gift for the king. On the day of the king's arrival, they all came to the village square early in the morning with a large cup of their finest wine and poured their offering into a small opening at the top of a large barrel. They were excited to see the king enjoy the best wine he'd ever tasted. When he arrived, the king was escorted to the square where he was ceremoniously presented with a silver cup and invited to draw wine from the barrel. He was told the villagers were delighted to have him taste the best they had to offer. He filled his cup from the spigot. And when he drank the wine, to his surprise he tasted only water. Had some miracle-worker turned wine to water? Had someone stolen all of the wine that was meant for the king? No. Each villager had reasoned, "I'll withhold my best wine and give water. There will be so many cups of excellent wine poured into the barrel that mine will never be missed." After all was said and done, the king was left with a town full of people who simply went through the motions of showing their love and admiration for him. This is what the nation of **Isra'el** was guilty of. And that is why **God** told **them** here: **These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.**

Through **Isaiah** as **His prophet, God** declared: **Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men (29:14b). This type of thinking would eventually bring the Jews to the Oral Law** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**) **and is the real reason for the rejection of Messiah the Jewish leadership.** This is quoted in **Matthew 15:1-9. Jesus** even says: **You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you** and then **Jesus** quotes this from **Isaiah** here. It is the fact that **the Jews** worshiped **God** by laws taught by men and not divine commandments that brought about this accusation of hypocrisy. This was a problem for **the Jews** in **Isaiah's** day, for **the Jews** of **Christ's** day, and for **Jews** today. **Messiah** takes these words and directly applies them to **the Pharisees. They** had a sense of religiosity that was a product of human works. And to reemphasize what I said above, **their** reliance upon **the Oral Law** is the reason that **Yeshua** was ultimately rejected by **His** generation. But **Messiah** had nothing to do with **the Oral Law** because **He** knew it had nothing to do with **God. He** knew it was man-made. And because **He** rejected *it*, **they** rejected

Him (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ek - It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons, That This Fellow Drives Out Demons**). This led to the worldwide dispersion in 70 AD, that will ultimately lead to the covenant between the antichrist and **Isra'el**, and the Great Tribulation or **His strange work**, and **His alien task (28:21)**.

Because **their worship of ADONAI was made up only of rules taught by men, God judged them and their wisdom would vanish**. When **Isaiah** prophesied that **once more the LORD will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish and the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish (29:14)**, **the near historical fulfillment** served to illustrate its future and ultimate fulfillment. When **Isaiah** made the prophecy, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was planning to conquer **Judah**. **The LORD** told **His prophet** not to fear because the king's plan would fail. But it would not fail because of the strength of **Judah's** army or because of the strategy of King Hezekiah or his advisors. No, **Judah** would be saved solely by **God's** power, with no human help. Human **wisdom** said that little **Judah** had no chance against the most powerful army known to the world at that time. However, **the wisdom of the wise** perished, and **the intelligence of the intelligent** vanished when **ADONAI** personally destroyed the Assyrians in a single night (see **Gw - Then the Angel of the LORD Put To Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp**).

Rabbi Saul used this quotation of **Isaiah** in **First Corinthians 1:19** to emphasize that **the wisdom of men** will be destroyed. **Isaiah's** teaching will have its ultimate fulfillment in the last days, when all men's philosophies and objections to the gospel will be done away with. **I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate**. Then Paul goes on to say: **Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world (First Corinthians 1:20)?** Mankind is inclined to try to solve their problems and fight their battles by their own cleverness and in their own might. But human cleverness and might only get in **God's** way, they only hinder **Him** rather than help **Him**. Solomon tells us that **there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death (Proverbs 14:12)**. One of the things that keep people away from **Christ** is their disagreement with the Bible. It does not agree with their way of thinking. Even if they were confused over what it is that they believe, they would rather be confused than simply take **God** at **His** Word. This willful unbelief is described by Paul in **Romans 1:18-23**. **Pretending to be wise**, these people are **fools**.

God pronounced a **woe** on those who thought **He** did not see their actions. The context to the accusation of human planning that excludes **ADONAI** from the equation is the Egyptian alliance (**30:1** to **31:9**). **God's** prophet declared: **Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know" (29:15)? They** attempted to hide **their** plans from **God** by doing things at night. But **they** had it backwards. **God** can **hide His plans from man (29:10-12)**, but **man** cannot **hide their plans from the LORD**.

Such thinking twisted the facts and confused **the potter** with **the clay (41:25; 45:9** and **64:8)**. **You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay!** A pot cannot deny that **the potter** made it, or **say the potter** is ignorant (**45:9, 64:8**). **Shall what is formed say to him who formed it. "He did not make me?" Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing" (29:16)?** They tell **God** what to do rather than seeking **His** direction. Then they tell **Him** that **He** lacks understanding! Despite this confusion, **Isaiah** encouraged the nation next with the knowledge that in the far eschatological future, things will be different. **Isaiah**, under the inspiration of **the Spirit of God**, normally follows up discouragement with encouragement.

Although we today no longer offer blood sacrifices, we run the same danger as the people in the Dispensation of Torah. That is, because we have performed certain religious activities, we believe **ADONAI** must do our will. We have prayed long and hard; therefore, **God** must heal our child. We have gone to church or messianic synagogue for months; as a result, **the LORD** must give us a good job. We have read the Bible daily; consequently, **God** must lift our depression. These are not acts of worship but attempts at manipulation. Worship should be a free expression of praise and thanks because of what **God** has already done for us. Of course, **He** wants to bless us even further, but all too often our attempts to use **Him**, while still maintaining control of our lives, only serve to block the very blessing **He** wants to give.¹⁰⁰