

Isaiah 6-39
God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation

Ch 6-12
God will rule with goodness and power, replacing human kings

Ch 13-27
God will destroy evil and dismantle this creation

Ch 28-35
God will instantly reverse bad and sad situations to become happy and glad

Ch 36-39
Human kings cannot enable long-term happiness

Isaiah 29 (NIVUK)

29 Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel,
the city where David settled!
Add year to year
and let your cycle of festivals go on.

² Yet I will besiege Ariel;
she will mourn and lament,
she will be to me like an altar hearth.^a
³ I will encamp against you on all sides;
I will encircle you with towers
and set up my siege works against you.

⁴ Brought low, you will speak from the ground;
your speech will mumble out of the dust.

Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth;
out of the dust your speech will whisper.

⁵ But your many enemies will become like fine dust,
the ruthless hordes like blown chaff.^b

Suddenly, in an instant,
⁶ the LORD Almighty will come
with thunder and earthquake and great noise,
with whirlwind and tempest and flames of a devouring fire.
⁷ Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
that attack her and her fortress and besiege her,
will be as it is with a dream,
with a vision in the night –

⁸ as when a hungry person dreams of eating,
but awakens hungry still;
as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking,
but awakens faint and thirsty still.

So will it be with the hordes of all the nations
that fight against Mount Zion.

Sunday 23 November 2025

1a. God sends an army to besiege Jerusalem... (29:1-5a)

Assyria's siege
In 701BC, King Sennacherib of Assyria tried to siege Jerusalem cf. Isaiah 36-37

1b. ...then makes the enemy armies vanish! (28:5b-8)

God's mighty rescue
God struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a night!
cf. Isaiah 10:16, 37:36

^a The Hebrew for *altar hearth* sounds like the Hebrew for *Ariel*.

^b The ESV translation of 29:5a is written,
*But the multitude of your foreign foes shall be like small dust,
and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff.*

Isaiah 28-35	28:1-6 Ephraim's self-trust ↓ Remnant's God-trust	28:7-13 "God's word is nonsense!" ↓ "I'll give you nonsense!"	28:14-29 "We trust in death!" ↓ "No, you will not!"	29:1-8 Jerusalem besieged ↓ Enemies made to disappear	29:9-24 Blind Judah cannot see God ↓ Judah can see God!	30:1-33 Judah's trust in Egypt leads to disaster ↓ God powerfully rescues Judah and blesses them
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2a. Judah are extremely unable to see God... (29:9-16)

- blind religious leaders

- won't read

- can't read

- optics-based worship

- 'wonder' i.e. judgement

- 'God doesn't see'

- 'created = creator'!

⁹ Be stunned and amazed,
blind yourselves and be sightless;
be drunk, but not from wine,
stagger, but not from beer.

¹⁰ The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep:
he has sealed your eyes (the prophets);
he has covered your heads (the seers).

¹¹ 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,
'Read this, please,' they will answer, 'I can't; it is sealed.' ¹² Or if
you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, 'Read
this, please,' they will answer, 'I don't know how to read.'

¹³ The Lord says:
'These people come near to me with their mouth
and honour me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
Their worship of me
is based on merely human rules they have been taught.'^c
¹⁴ Therefore once more I will astound these people
with wonder upon wonder;
the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.'

¹⁵ 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?'

¹⁶ You turn things upside down,
as if the potter were thought to be like the clay!
Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,
'You did not make me'?
Can the pot say to the potter,
'You know nothing'?

^c Hebrew; Septuagint *They worship me in vain; / their teachings are merely human rules*

<u>31:1-9</u> Judah trust in human Egypt ↓ God brings divine power to rescue	<u>32:1-8</u> Oppressed by injustice ↓ Ruled by a righteous King	<u>32:9-20</u> Judah faces judgement for her complacency ↓ God gifts his Holy Spirit	<u>33:1-24</u> Judah suffers under an unjust destroyer ↓ God rescues Judah and becomes her forever-King!	<u>34:1-35:10</u> 2nd Exodus God brutally destroys <i>all</i> enemy nations... (34:1-17) ...and leads his people through a <i>verdant</i> wilderness! (35:1-10)
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¹⁷ In a very short time,
will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field
and the fertile field seem like a forest?

2b. ...so God promises instant sight!
(29:17-24)
- extreme ordering

¹⁸ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.

- able to hear God's word

¹⁹ Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD;
the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

- justice will prevail

²⁰ The ruthless will vanish,
the mockers will disappear,
and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down –

²¹ those who with a word make someone out to be guilty,
who ensnare the defender in court
and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.

²² Therefore this is what the LORD,
who redeemed Abraham,
says to the descendants of Jacob:

‘No longer will Jacob be ashamed;
no longer will their faces grow pale.

- no more punishment for God's people

²³ When they see among them their children,
the work of my hands,

- no more sinfulness within God's people

they will keep my name holy;
they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

²⁴ Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding;
those who complain will accept instruction.’

<u>Isaiah 1-5</u> Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	<u>Isaiah 6-39</u> New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	<u>Isaiah 40-55</u> New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	<u>Isaiah 56-66</u> Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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For reflection

Diagnostic

1. To what extent do you think about God doing *decisive reversals* on judgement day? Why?
2. To what extent do you see parallels between 29:9-16 and contemporary Christianity? Are there any particularly convicting verses?

Devotional

3. Are there parts of Isaiah 29 that struck you? Are there parts you need God's help to hear?
4. What parts of life in this cursed creation do you look forward to God *decisively reversing*?