

GOD'S PROMISE OF A GLORIOUS TRANSFORMATION IN THE FUTURE: THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

ISAIAH 29:17–24

Introduction

Down through history the Jews have probably suffered as much if not more persecution than any other people on earth. Tyrant after tyrant has attempted to eradicate them. Yet despite the slaughter of millions, the Jews have survived the holocausts launched against them. There is a reason — a very specific reason — why they have survived. God! God has a plan for them. Way back in ancient history the Lord chose Abraham to give birth to the Jews for three very specific purposes:

- => to be the people through whom He would send the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, to save the world.
- => to be the people through whom He would give His Word, the Holy Bible, to the world.
- => to be His witnesses to the unbelievers of the world, that the Lord Himself (Yahweh, Jehovah) is the only true and living God

Down through history the Jews failed in their calling to be strong witnesses for the Lord. Tragically, they even turned away from Him and worshipped false gods, the idols of this world. As a result, God's hand of judgment fell upon the Jews time and time again. God always executed judgment in the hope that the people would cry out to Him for deliverance, repent of their sins and renew their commitment to serve Him. Although the judgments did sometimes cause the Jews to return to the Lord, every recommitment was temporary. Tragically, the people soon returned to their sinful ways and false worship.

In the present Scripture, Isaiah once again warned the Jews of the coming judgment of God. But as usual, they ignored the warning. This is the second of five *woes* or strong warnings that God's prophet pronounces in chapters 28 to 33. In this particular warning, Isaiah gives a glimpse into the events of the end times, in particular the events of Armageddon and the glorious transformation that is to take place in the future kingdom of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is, *Woe — A Strong Warning to Ariel (Jerusalem): God's Unusual Dealings with Jerusalem, 29:1-24*.

1. God's clear warning of coming distress and judgment (vv. 1-4).
 2. God's future deliverance: a picture of the battle of Armageddon, 63:1-64:12; Rev. 19:17-21 (vv. 5-8).
 3. God's three major indictments (vv. 9-16).
 4. God's promise of a glorious transformation in the future: the future kingdom of Christ (vv. 17-24).
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Isaiah 29:17–24 God's Promise of a Glorious Transformation in the Future

God gave His people the promise of a glorious future. Note the phrases “in a very short time” and “in that day” (vv. 17-18). These terms point to the Messiah’s kingdom, to the time when Jesus Christ will return to earth to establish His kingdom. The glorious transformation described in these verses could not take place on earth apart from God’s direct intervention. Isaiah is predicting a future transformation of the earth and of the hearts of God’s people. Note the specific details of this glorious renovation:

1. The earth will be transformed (v. 17). Lebanon, which had been devastated by the Assyrians, will be turned into a fertile field. And the fertile fields that had been devastated will grow huge forests. Simply stated, the earth will be turned into a paradise for both people and animals.
2. The disabled will be healed (v. 18). For the first time, the deaf will be able to hear the Word of God as it is read. The eyes of the blind will be opened, and they will be able to see.
3. The humble and poor will rejoice in the Lord (v. 19). The humble will be exalted, and the poor will have all their needs met. God will generously provide His people with housing, food, clothing and all the other necessities of life (Mt. 6:33).
4. The ruthless will be taken away. All the false witnesses and dishonest lawyers, judges, leaders and all others who are corrupt will face the terrifying judgment of God. They will be punished and removed from earth. Righteousness and justice will rule over all the earth (vv. 20-21).
5. Another marvellous change that the Messiah’s kingdom will bring is a change of attitude. The mind set of God’s chosen people will be totally transformed (vv. 22-24). Five specific changes will take place in the Jews:
 - a) They will no longer be shamed by those who mock, ridicule, abuse, persecute or oppress them. No evil person will be left on earth to strike fear in the hearts of those who truly follow the Lord. No longer will their faces grow pale in fear, for they will be redeemed just as the Lord redeemed Abraham.
 - b) They will finally acknowledge that it is the Lord who truly blesses them (v. 23a). Witnessing the phenomenal transformation taking place on earth, they will realize that they themselves are the work of God’s hands. He had truly chosen them to be the channel through whom He would send His Word and the Messiah into the world. Thus they will turn to the Lord, acknowledging Christ as the true Messiah.
 - c) They will join all other believers in living righteously and keeping God’s name holy (v. 23b). No longer will they be selfish or give in to their lustful desires. They will acknowledge the Holy One of Jacob and surrender their lives to the Lord.
 - d) They will genuinely worship the Lord and be faithful in their worship.
 - e) They will no longer go astray or complain. They will accept the truth of God’s Word (v. 24). They will obey His Word and grow in their knowledge and understanding of Him.

Thought 1. The amazing changes described in Scripture could not take place on earth or in people apart from the direct intervention of God. But the wonderful promise of the Lord is this: He *will* intervene! A glorious transformation will take place in the future. Both the earth and the hearts of people will be transformed. All evil, lawlessness, violence, immorality and injustice will be erased from the face of the earth. All sinful, wicked people who reject God and oppress His people — all unbelievers — will be removed from the face of the earth. *In that day*, the day when the Lord Jesus returns to set up His kingdom, a magnificent change will sweep the entire earth. Listen to some of the wonderful transformations that will take place *in that day* (see *Millennial Reign of Christ*, Isa. 2:1-5).

Acts 3:21 *He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

Exo 23:25-26 *Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.*

Lev 26:6 *I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country.*

Isa 14:3 *On the day the Lord gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and from the harsh labour forced on you.*

Isa 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.*

Isa 35:5-6 *Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.*

Isa 60:18 *No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.*

Zep 3:13 *They will do no wrong; they will tell no lies. A deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid.*

Zep 3:15 *The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the king of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. ■*