

May 6th, 2018
"The Perils of Disingenuous Worship"
Isaiah 29
Focal Passage: Verses 9-18

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

April 29 2 Kings 23-36	May 3 1 Chron. 7-8
April 30 1 Chron. 1-2	May 4 1 Chron. 9-11
May 1 1 Chron. 3-5	May 5 1 Chron. 12-3
May 2 1 Chron. 6	May 6 1 Chron. 15-17

Cross References: *John 4:23, Philippians 3:3, Romans 8:5-8, 1 Corinthians 2:14 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Romans 1:18-32, Ephesians 2:1-10, 2 Timothy 2:25, 1 Corinthians 12:3*

Lesson Introduction: *In this chapter, we see once again that God is going to bring judgment on His people, as well as those who come against them (V. 1-8). The main reason for this coming judgment on the people of God was the practice of religious ceremony without genuine love for the Lord from the heart (V. 1, 13). In this week's lesson, we will examine the problem of disingenuous worship (V. 13), the cause of disingenuous worship (V. 9-12), the results of disingenuous worship (V.14-16), and the cure for disingenuous worship (V. 17-24)*

Key Memory Verse: Isaiah 29:13

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- Religious ceremony that lacks Spirit-filled, genuine love and obedience is meaningless to God (V. 13).
- The Lord gives the rebellious over to spiritual blindness (V. 9-12).
- Spiritual blindness and disingenuous worship lead to a false sense of self-righteousness and a disregard for the sovereignty of God (V. 14-16).
- Sinners are rescued from spiritual blindness, and are able to recognize God as Holy, by His grace (V. 18).

Isaiah 29:9-18

**9 Astonish yourselves and be astonished;
blind yourselves and be blind!
Be drunk, but not with wine;**

**stagger, but not with strong drink!
10 For the Lord has poured out upon you
a spirit of deep sleep,
and has closed your eyes (the prophets),
and covered your heads (the seers).**

11 And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." 12 And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

13 And the Lord said:

**"Because this people draw near with their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
while their hearts are far from me,
and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,
14 therefore, behold, I will again
do wonderful things with this people,
with wonder upon wonder;
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."**

**15 Ah, you who hide deep from the Lord your counsel,
whose deeds are in the dark,
and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"**

**16 You turn things upside down!
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay,
that the thing made should say of its maker,
"He did not make me";
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,
"He has no understanding"?**

**17 Is it not yet a very little while
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?**

**18 In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.**

Discussion Section 1: The Problem of Disingenuous Worship (V. 13)

-What is the core problem with the worship described in this verse?

-What does engaging in this type of worship tell us about our understanding of salvation?

-What might it look like to honor God with your lips while your heart is far from Him? What are some modern-day examples?

-How might your fear of the Lord be a “**commandment taught by men**”?

Note: *The core problem with the type of worship mentioned in V. 13 is the heart of the worshipper. They believed that religious ceremony was enough to make them right with God, and placed their trust in their own abilities to follow the law, rather than worshipping from a heart filled with gratitude and love that has been changed by God. This mindset is unfortunately prevalent in our area of the world (the Bible-belt). Many people believe that because they grew up in church, walked an aisle, got baptized, say their prayers at night, etc., they are good with God, and have done enough to earn His acceptance. God is not interested in our vain efforts to earn salvation.*

Jesus said, “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:23). Paul stated, “we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Genuine worship starts with being filled by the Spirit, and recognizing the truth that Christ is our salvation. These passage ought to cause us to stop and consider what is at the core of our religious practices and worship.

Discussion Section 2: The Cause of Disingenuous Worship (V. 9-12)

-What do these verses reveal as the cause of the disingenuous worship of spoken of in V. 13?

Note: *In this section of our passage, we see that the people are blind to the truth God has revealed. Even though the Lord had spoken through His prophets, the people did not heed their warnings and continued on in spiritual blindness and drunkenness. The Scriptures are clear that we are all naturally spiritually blind (Romans 8:5-8, 1 Corinthians 2:14 2 Corinthians 4:3-6), and like the Israelites, apart from the grace of God, we will stumble in a drunken spiritual stupor. This blindness is due to our sinfulness, and because of it, all of our attempts at worship through religious ceremony will be misguided, and displeasing to God.*

-What does it mean that “**the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, and covered your heads**”?

Note: *Because of Israel’s continual stubbornness and willful disobedience of the warnings of the Lord, He completely turned them over to their blindness, by removing their prophets and seers (V. 10). In Romans 1 we see that the result of continual denial of God’s revealed truth is more and more spiritual blindness (Romans 1:18-32).*

Discussion Section 3: The Results of Disingenuous Worship (V. 14-16)

-What do these verses (specifically V. 16) tell us about where human wisdom will ultimately take us when we are practicing insincere religion?

Note: *When we walk in blindness, and worship disingenuously, with a desire to earn our way to God by our religious works, we will ultimately have a terribly skewed view of our relationship with God. V. 16 says that things will be turned “upside down.” He is the potter, we are the clay. We have no right to think ourselves wise, or worthy of salvation because of our good conduct. It is vital that we understand that He is the one who grants repentance (2 Timothy 2:25), enables us to call on Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3), and makes us alive in Christ by His grace and mercy (Ephesians 2:4-5). We have no authority over God, and He owes us nothing. Our lives hinge on His mercy and grace. Praise God for His incredible kindness and patience with us!*

Discussion Section 4: The Cure for Disingenuous Worship (V. 17-18)

-What has to happen for the deaf to hear and the blind to see? (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Note: *After all the rebellion of the spiritually blind, disingenuous worshipers, we see something incredible transpire in V. 18. The blind now see! The deaf now hear! This shows the miraculous nature of our salvation. This passage should be a great reminder that our salvation is not dependent on our merits, but on God’s grace in giving us spiritual sight (Ephesians 2:1-10). It should also act as a warning to anyone of us who might be putting our hope in our own religious merits, rather than trusting and treasuring Christ.*