

Isaiah 29

10-28-04

“Mouth Religion!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Worship tonight – Moi.
- 1.2. **Story:** I have read of one that offered his prince a great sum of money to have permission once or twice a day to come into his presence, and only say, '**God save your Majesty!**' The prince, wondering at this large offer for so small a favor, asked him, 'What advantage would this afford him?' "Oh sire," he said, "this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the country for one who is a great favorite at court and such an opinion will help me more than it costs me for the purchase."
 - 1.2.1. "Not everyone who says to me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven.
 - 1.2.2. "Not everyone who says to me, '**I'm a Christian,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven."

2. Jerusalem! (1-12)

- 2.1. **On Fire!** (1-4)
- 2.2. (1) **Ariel**- “*Lion of God*”, or “*hearth of fire*”(in the sense of place of sacrifice)
 - 2.2.1. **Hearth** – Prob. refers to the *altar hearth* of God in Ezek.43:15,16.
 - 2.2.2. Play on words, Ariel is made Ariel.
 - 2.2.2.1. The **hearth** becomes the picture of a **burning furnace**.
 - 2.2.2.2. **Is fire a good thing?** Well it all depends **where** it is, if it's **contained!** (A fire in its rightful place (fire place, stove) is good. **Not contained** (forest fire).
 - 2.2.2.2.1. Just like marital intimacy vs. extra-marital intimacy.
 - 2.2.3. **Hearth** – We may think of the **fireplace** of a home, which is often thought of as a symbol of the home and the life of the family who live in it.
 - 2.2.3.1. We might picture God sitting around His **heavenly fire place w/pictures** of all His children on the mantel.
 - 2.2.3.2. Or picture God **warming His hands** upon the warm fire of our hearts! (Could He? upon your heart tonight? – What's your hearts temperature?)
[Rate your heart]
 - 2.2.3.3. **Arctic**-icy-cold-cool-lukewarm-warm-hot-red hot-Habenero?

- 2.3. (4) Picture a funeral procession in Isaiah's day(not wailing but grieving).
- 2.3.1. People sitting, lining the streets. You don't speak loudly, but with **hush tones**.
- 2.3.2. In their soft mumblings they're like mediums & enchanter.¹
- 2.4. **Losers!** (5-8)
- 2.5. (7,8) Then your our enemy will suddenly disappear, like it was a bad dream.
- 2.5.1. They'll not only vanished, but were never to be seen again.
- 2.5.2. Their **dreams** of success have become **nightmares** of defeat.
- 2.5.3. Ultimately, nobody can fight against the people of God.
- 2.5.3.1. Is.54:17 "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. **This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,**" Says the LORD."
- 2.5.4. **Q: Can this picture be used of the Church today also? (Yes!)**
- 2.5.4.1. Mt.16:18 "the gates of Hades **shall not** prevail against it."
- 2.5.4.2. Heb.12:28 "we are receiving a kingdom which **cannot** be shaken,"
- 2.6. **Spiritually Blinded!** (9-12)
- 2.7. The prophets don't understand the visions & God's messages anymore. (doesn't matter how educated they are, or are not)
- 2.7.1. They are like "*drunken, sleeping, blind men*" trying to read a sealed book.
- 2.7.2. **Q: How's your vision? How's your spiritual eyesight?**
- 2.7.3. Before my **Lasik surgery** I could literally say, "*I was blind but now I see*".
- 2.7.3.1. **Lasik Surgery** is the direct **reshaping of the cornea** through a surgical procedure called radial keratotomy.
- 2.7.3.1.1.Explain: Blue Laser light on patient in front of me!
- 2.7.3.2. Similar to us spiritually before Christ. Everything was fuzzy.
- 2.7.3.2.1.We tried squinting, glasses, contacts, but they never took care of the problem. We needed surgery!
- 2.8. **Religion w/o Reality!** (13-14)
- 2.9. This happens every time we are blind to **God's vision**, but on the other hand adhere painstakingly to the **precepts of men!**
- 2.9.1. It speaks to those who love **human traditions & rules** more than the **one rule** of God's Word.

¹ Harry Bultema; pg.272

- 2.9.2. **Rejecting sacred traditions!** - *It's amazing on how nervous people get around here if we change any part of our worship service.*
- 2.9.2.1. Can we have a worship service with teaching only? Singing only? Can we reverse the order (teach 1st, songs 2nd)? Could I sit & you stand the whole time? Topical vs. verse by verse? Can we just tell God's Story {not expository}?
- 2.9.2.2. **Q: Can you prove in Scripture what you consider the order of service?**
- 2.10. **See Mt.15:1-3, 7-9**
- 2.10.1. *"They didn't wash their hands before their bagel?"*
- 2.10.2. **"Tradition of the Elders"** –
- 2.10.2.1. **"Of the Elders"** - This was in reference to the **Oral Law** "handed down" by the Elders of the past. {eventually written down, called the Mishna}
- 2.10.2.2. [This soon became *"more important"* & *"more Authoritative"* than the orig. law of Moses, because it defined the former.]
- 2.10.3. What is "Tradition" when **compared** w/a commandment? What is "Tradition" when it is in **conflict** w/a commandment? What are **Elders** in comparison w/**God**?
- 2.10.4. We must be Flexible to change our man made traditions especially when staleness sets in! [example: The style of songs used in Worship]
- 2.10.4.1. "The last 7 words" of a dying church are: *"We never did it that way before!"*
- 2.10.5. They gave **Mouth-Religion**, & paid **Lip-Homage**, but not **Heart Worship!**
- 2.10.5.1. Like the one son who, when asked to work in his father's vineyard said, **"I go, sir,"** but he did not go! {Lip-Service}
- 2.10.5.2. "God is in the hypocrite's mouth, but the world is in his heart"
- 2.10.6. Ezek. had this problem w/his people! **Ezek. 33:30-32 (Read)**
- 2.10.7. Paul sums it up, **"They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good"**. Titus 1:16
- 2.10.8. Don't miss this → **Jesus used What to combat their Traditions?... Scripture!**
- 2.10.8.1. He broke their wooden weapons w/***the Sword of the Spirit!***
- 2.10.8.2. **Holy Scripture** must be our weapon against the Church of traditions!
- 2.10.8.3. **"Never lay down your sword to fight stick-to-stick combat!"**

- 2.11. William Temple(Archbishop of Canterbury,1942-44) said, “To Worship is to quicken the **conscience** by the holiness of God, to feed the **mind** w/the truth of God, to purge the **imagination** by the beauty of God, to pen the **heart** to the love of God, & to **devote** the will to the purpose of God.”
- 2.12. Worship demands preparation! Q: How did you prepare yourself this evening?
- 2.12.1. “The 60 min. before Church for many Christians is the most **unholy** hour of the week. Eating, dressing, & scurrying around the house to finish those last minute tasks & then driving to church out-of-sorts w/one another is not conducive to a prepared heart. What we do **before** the service **Will** determine what happens **within it!**”
- 2.12.2. John MacArthur said, “The **form** of worship is not as important as the **spiritual condition of the heart**. If our corporate Worship isn't the expression of our individual worshiping lives, it is unacceptable. If you think you can live any way you want & then go to church on Sunday morning or Thursday evening, & then **turn on Worship** w/the saints, you're wrong.”
- 2.13. **Upside Down!** (15,16)
- 2.14. (15,16) Probably in reference to their “secret” covenant with Egypt.
- 2.14.1. They acted as though God knew nothing about their scheming.
- 2.14.2. Q: “Can the thing made fool the Maker?”
- 2.15. Here is the blind leading the blinder!
- 2.16. My denial of my sin **protects, preserves, perpetuates** that sin!
- 2.17. Annie Dillard, in her book Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, writes: At the end of the island I noticed a **small green frog**. He was exactly half in and half out of the water. He was a very small frog with wide, dull eyes. And just as I looked at him, he slowly crumpled and began to sag. The spirit vanished from his eyes as if snuffed. His skin emptied and drooped; his very skull seemed to collapse and settle like a kicked tent...An **oval shadow** hung in the water behind the drained frog: then the shadow glided away. The frog skin bag started to sink. I had read about the water bug, but never seen one. "**Giant water bug**" is really the name of the creature, which is an enormous, heavy-bodied brown beetle. It eats insects, tadpoles, fish, and frogs. Its grasping forelegs are mighty and hooked inward. It seizes a victim with these legs, hugs it tight, and paralyzes it with enzymes injected during a vicious bite. Through the puncture shoots the poison that dissolves the victim's muscles and bones and organs--all but the skin--and through it the giant water bug sucks out the victim's body, reduced to juice.
- 2.17.1. Hidden sins can suck the life out of us!

- 2.18. **Right Side Up!** (17-21)
- 2.19. **This is the great reversal!** - Where darkness is turned to light!
- 2.20. **Hallowed Be Thy Name!** (22-24)
- 2.21. Isaiah looks forward to a time where there will be a people of God who will praise God, not with **lip**, but with **life!**
- 2.21.1. Ultimately spirituality is **a life of holiness** in which we are to **live** to God's praise as well to **worship** to his praise!
- 2.22. **Praise God!...there's hope for those who have erred in spirit or complained!**
- 2.22.1. In the end God's people will **hear & see** His truth, **rejoice** in it, & **honor** the Holy One of Israel.
- 2.22.2. And you **need not wait** to have Him change your life!
- 2.22.3. **Give him an honest heart, & let the Potter have his way in your life!**²

² Warren Wiersbe; pg.469