

Hope for the Future

Key Verse: *“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”*
—Isaiah 29:24

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 29:13-24

ALTHOUGH THE LESSONS

contained in our selected verses were directed toward Israel during the days of the Prophet Isaiah, the principles contained in them equally apply to mankind in general. Isaiah 29:9 says that Israel was “drunken” and “they stagger,” yet it was not the result of wine or strong drink. They had become intoxicated

with the false teachings of the heathen nations around them. Israel had forgotten the principles of righteousness contained in their Law, delivered by God through the hands of Moses. Because of this, God gave them “the spirit of deep sleep,” closing their eyes for a time and sealing his word from further understanding. —vss. 10,11

In general, mankind has also forgotten God’s laws of righteousness and has instead substituted in their place the laws of selfishness, greed, pride, and other principles which have their origin in Satan, the “god of this world.” (II Cor. 4:4) Here too, God has turned away his face from fallen man during this present period of sin and iniquity on the earth. Paul wrote concerning Israel, and by extension the world of mankind, “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” —Rom. 11:32

Israel’s unfaithfulness was due to their heart condition.

They had an outward show of obedience to God, but had “removed their heart far from” him, and their fear of God was “taught by the precept” of fallen men. (Isa. 29:13) As a result, the nation fell into a slavish fear of bondage to outward ceremonies and manmade traditions, rather than a reverential fear based on faith and trust in the great God who had provided for their every need. Despite the unfaithfulness of natural Israel, as well as mankind’s general lack of faith and obedience toward God, our Creator has made a wonderful provision through the salvation given by his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus.

All of Israel and mankind will have the opportunity of coming back into heart harmony with God in Christ’s coming kingdom. Isaiah writes, “Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, ... a marvellous work and a wonder.”—vs. 14

Verse 17 speaks of a time when the wilderness shall become “a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest.” It is to be a time when the knowledge of God will fill the earth, and his ways will be made plain to all mankind. Then, the prophet writes, “The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”—vs. 19

“Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.” (vss. 22,23) Soon will be the time when all people shall come to a true understanding of the Heavenly Father. As our Key Verse states, they will “learn doctrine”—the just and righteous teachings of God’s will for men, and no one will be permitted to deceive them any longer. ■