

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Isaiah 29:9-16

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, June 16, 2013
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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 16, 2013**, is from **Isaiah 29:9-16**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at <http://InternationalBibleLessons.org> and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

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Isaiah 29:9-16

(Isaiah 29:9) Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not from wine; stagger, but not from strong drink!

Isaiah is reporting God's views and his views about the people in the kingdom of Judah. Of course these verses can apply to any nation and people at any given time. By their actions and false thinking they were blinding themselves to the truth and they were choosing to cloud or ignore their reason rather than listen to Isaiah or live according to God's moral law of love as revealed by Moses and the prophets. God sometimes lets people to go ahead and do wrong things. Through Isaiah, God even told the Israelites to go ahead and do wrong things if that was their choice and disposition, but He also has warned them that they would suffer the consequences for persisting in doing wrong. Perhaps by suffering the consequences of their wrongdoing they would turn back to God and turn from their wrongdoing.

(Isaiah 29:10) For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep; he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers.

As God's judgment and punishment upon them for their stubborn refusal to repent of their sins and return to faith and obedience to God, God poured out a punishment of sleep upon them, a punishment of reinforcing their choice to

ignore God and His warnings. God closed the eyes of the false prophets so they would be unable to see the future; so they would keep teaching falsehoods that they and the people wanted to believe and listen to in their rebellion against God.

(Isaiah 29:11) The vision of all this has become for you like the words of a sealed document. If it is given to those who can read, with the command, “Read this,” they say, “We cannot, for it is sealed.”

Because the prophets and the people had closed their eyes to reading, understanding, and obeying God’s word (the Bible as they had it at that time, the writings of Moses, David, some of the prophets, and the Proverbs), their present situation and the warnings of Isaiah had become has a sealed document that they could not understand. God allowed their disobedient choices to stand and the necessary consequences and punishments would come upon them.

(Isaiah 29:12) And if it is given to those who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” they say, “We cannot read.”

The people Isaiah spoke to and wrote to had the opportunity to learn and read the law of God, or if they could not read they had many opportunities to hear the law of God read so they could love and obey God if they chose. Sometimes the moral law of God is given to those who have chosen to live disobedient and self-centered lives and they try to make the excuse that they cannot read rather than seek to learn the law of God in order to obey and please God.

(Isaiah 29:13) The Lord said: Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote;

The heart, mind, purpose, and will of those God spoke to through Isaiah had substituted the performance of rituals of worship for true obedience to God from hearts of love. With hearts from far God, they refused to embrace God and His will with thankful hearts and a desire to bring happiness to God. They spoke what they had learned or memorized, but the words meant nothing to them personally.

(Isaiah 29:14) so I will again do amazing things with this people, shocking and amazing. The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden.

The amazing things that God would do involved their punishment. They would be being carried off into exile and King Solomon’s Temple would be destroyed. The amazing things included the amazing stupidity of those in places of leadership, whether political or religious, and the unwillingness of the people to seek out and listen to the discerning (prophets such as Isaiah and others). The amazing things included the perfect timing of God in their return to their homeland after 70 years of exile.

(Isaiah 29:15) Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the LORD, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”

Very little has changed in the ways of the worldly since the days of Isaiah. Those who do not believe in God often make plans and live in total disregard of God. They refuse to believe in God or they refuse to believe that if there were a God that He would ever hold them accountable for plans and deeds that harm others and themselves.

(Isaiah 29:16) You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay? Shall the thing made say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of the one who formed it, “He has no understanding”?

God tells the atheist, or the one who has turned from believing in the God of the Bible and has turned to believing in himself supremely, that they do not recognize that they have been created – that all that exists in creation, God created. Those who deny our Creator have no understanding, no matter how many university degrees they may have or how much honor the world bestows upon them for their supposed intelligence, and if they do not repent they will understand someday to their horror.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think God allows people to suffer the natural consequences of their choices?
2. What can happen to someone’s reasoning and thinking ability when they persist in doing wrong in spite of knowing what is right, hearing warnings to stop what they are doing, and experiencing or seeing others experience some of the consequences of doing wrong?
3. Why do you think some people draw near to God with their mouths and some semblance of worshiping God when they have no intention of really obeying God?
4. What might it mean when God says to someone that their heart is far from Him?
5. What does God say about the person who denies that God created the world and them?

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