



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

ISAIAH 1-39

Week 3

DAY 15

Eat, Drink and Be Merry...

Isaiah 21-22

OPENING
up to the Word

What is the most common emotion you feel when something bad is going to happen to you and you can't do anything about it? (a) dread, (b) panic, (c) calm acceptance, (d) apathy.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How did the impending calamity affect Isaiah physically (21:3-4)?
2. Judah was putting her hope in a new king in Babylon to protect her from Assyria. What did God tell Isaiah would happen to their great hope (v. 9)?
3. What steps did Judah take to protect Jerusalem militarily, and what step *didn't* they take (22:8-11)?
4. When the inhabitants of Jerusalem were surrounded by Assyrian troops, what strange attitude did they take toward their fate (vs. 12-13)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you feel when something you were hoping for and expecting doesn't happen?
2. If you knew something terrible was going to happen to someone you love, and you told them, how would you feel if they wouldn't believe you?

WINDOW
on the Word

"An invader comes" (21:1). In 722 B.C. a Chaldean prince from the Persian Gulf area, named Marduk-apal-iddina, rebelled against Assyria and captured Babylon, becoming its king. His rebellion lasted 12 years. In 710 B.C., Assyrian king Sargon expelled him from Babylon, and Sennacherib of Assyria finally defeated him in 702 B.C. Hezekiah probably felt that Marduk-apal-iddina would break Assyrian power, but his hopes were dashed. The king of Babylon could not help him.

***Warriors of Kedar** (21:17) were an Arabian tribe defeated in 715 B.C. by Sargon II, who wrote that he had conquered a number of Arabian tribes. The **Valley of Vision** (22:1) refers to the city of Jerusalem, near the Kidron Valley, where God revealed himself in a vision to Isaiah. **Shebna** was a high court official negotiating with Sennacherib. He may have opposed Isaiah's message. On the other hand, **Eliakim** was apparently a godly and trusting man.*

The Coming Apocalypse

DAY 16

Isaiah 23–24

Have you ever seen a movie or read a book about the end of the world? Did the description accurately portray how you think the world will end?

1. What was Tyre, and what was it famous for (23:1)?
2. How long would Tyre's punishment last (v. 15)? How would her profits and earnings be spent differently?
3. While chapter 23 deals with the punishment of a local people, how does chapter 24 differ (24:1-3)?
4. What will bring about this final judgment (vs. 5-6)?

What one aspect of God's judgment on the world encourages you? What one aspect of God's judgment on the world bothers you?

***Tyre** was a chief city and port of Phoenicia, whose citizens were dependent on the sea and trade for their livelihood. Tyre fell to an Assyrian invasion at the end of the 8th century. In 701 Assyria placed Ethbaal III over Tyre, but Assyria's power eventually waned, and Tyre was able to become independent again. "**Lay waste the earth**" (24:1). While Tyre and Sidon's judgment was local and temporary, it presents a historical pattern followed by other city-states, nations and empires.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

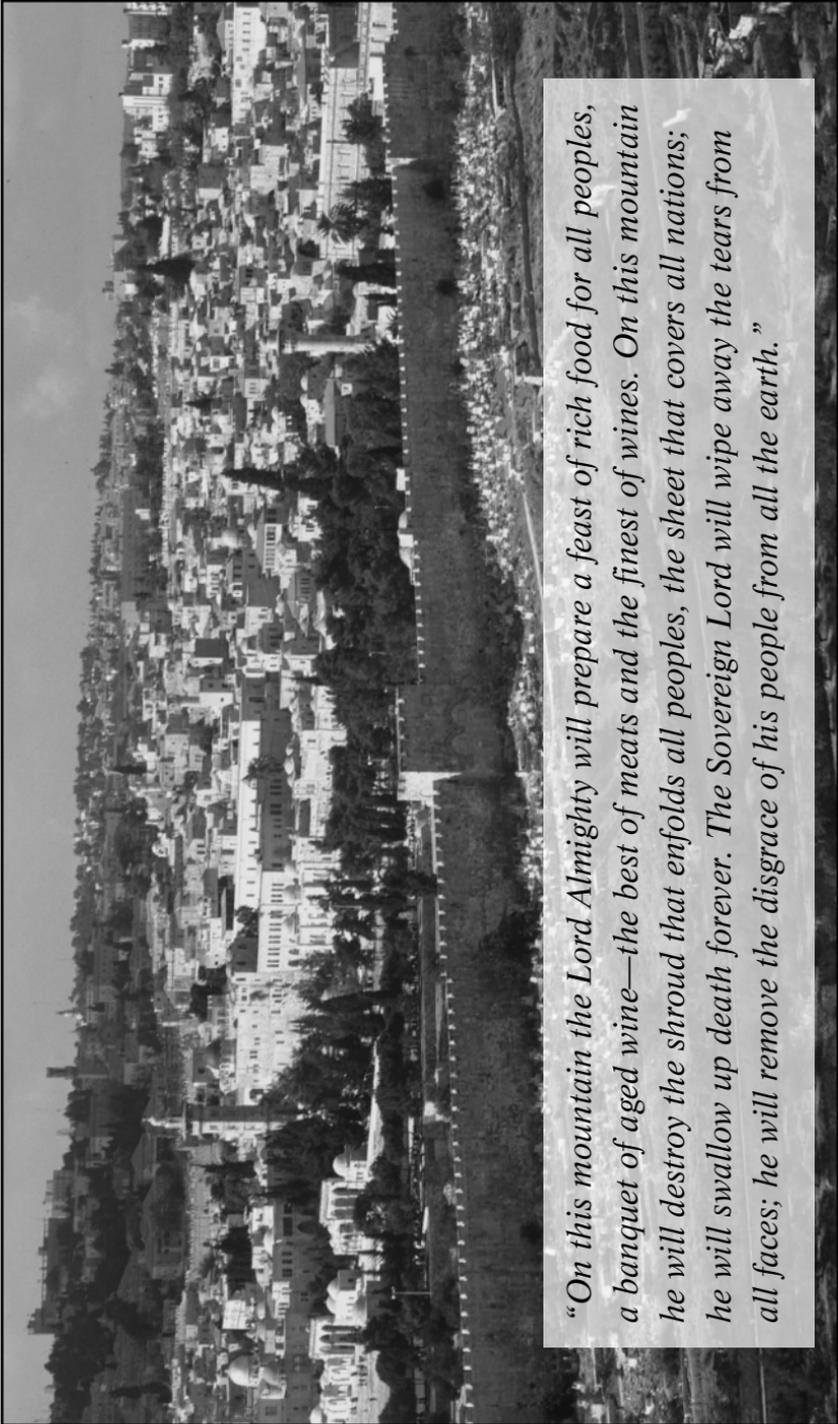
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



“On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; 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.”

Perfect Faithfulness

DAY 17

Isaiah 25–26

What personal experiences lead you to believe God to be perfectly faithful?

1. According to Isaiah 25:4, how had God shown his faithfulness for Israel and the world to see?
2. Is Isaiah speaking only of God's work in the past or only of his work in the future?
3. How do verses 7-8 seem to indicate that Isaiah was foreseeing God's work in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
4. What does God promise to do for anyone who will continue to trust the Lord (26:3)?
5. To what does God liken Israel's distress in her time of future trouble (vs. 17-18)?

1. "God has been perfectly faithful in my life." How do you respond to this statement? (a) completely agree, (b) mostly agree, (c) somewhat agree, (d) hardly agree, (e) don't agree.

2. If you don't think God has been faithful in your life, what is the reason? How can you reconcile his activities with your expectations (Isa 55:8-9)?

3. If you have found God to be perfectly faithful to you in the past, what do you expect him to do for you in the future?

4. Is it possible that you still need to "wait on the Lord" for him to complete his perfect faithfulness in your life? In what areas?

"A refuge for the poor...the song of the ruthless is stilled" (25:1-5). One of the continuing encouragements in Scripture is how God is able to change conditions facing us in life. God is able to rescue the poor and needy who have no one to rescue them, and he is able to silence and subdue the ruthless who believe no one can stop them. ***"Moab will be trampled"*** (v. 10). This continual enemy of Israel was known for pride and arrogance. Despite her cleverness, she could not escape God's judgment. ***"Gave birth to the wind"*** (26:18). In pregnancy and labor, there is pain, yet a baby is finally delivered. In this case, Isaiah poetically describes that Israel will endure pain without delivering anything.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

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on the Word

*“In that day—‘Sing
about a fruitful
vineyard: I, the Lord,
watch over it; I water
it continually. I
guard it day and
night so that no one
may harm it.’”*

Isaiah 27:2-3

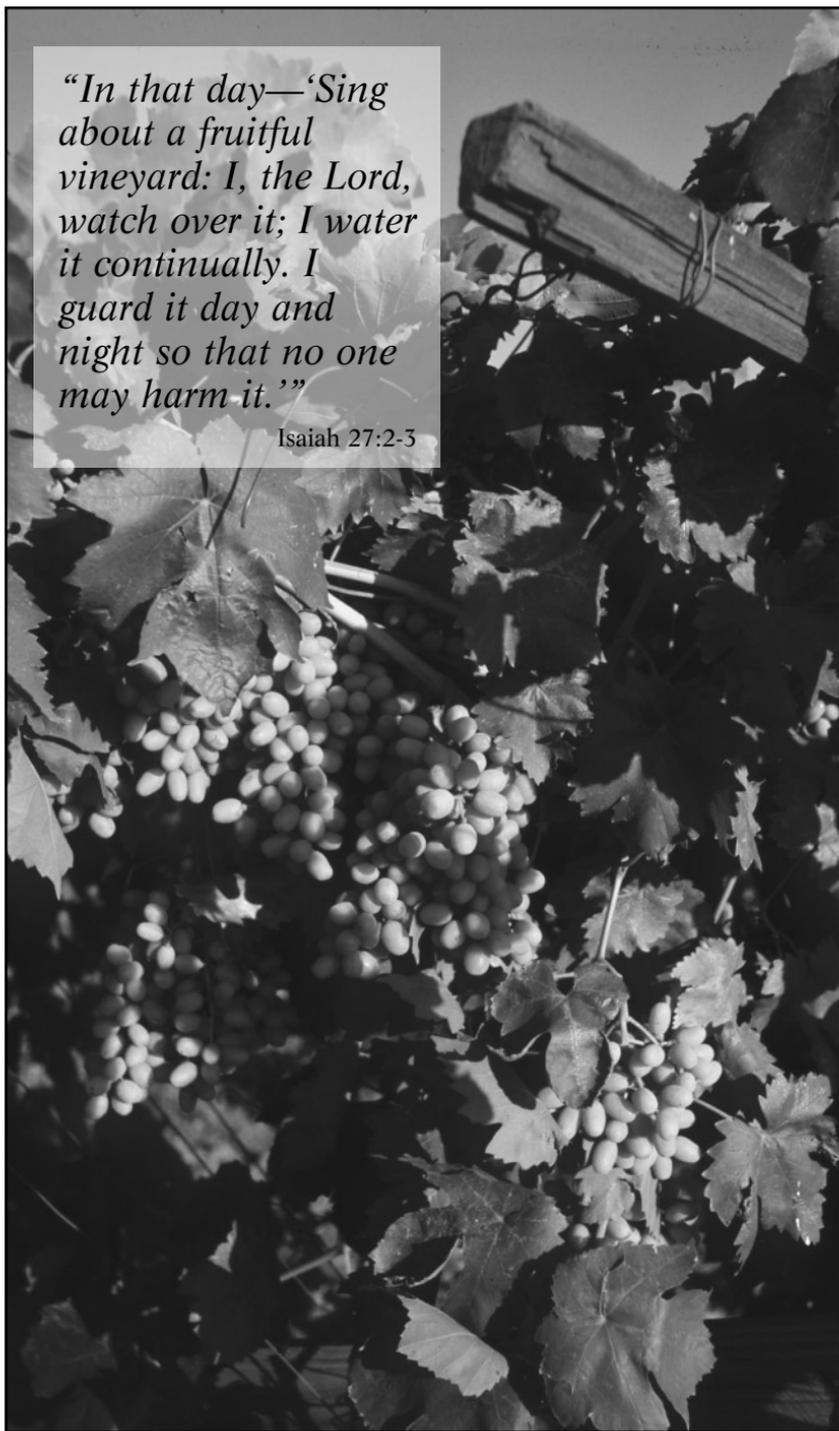


Photo by Joseph Clayton—PTM

The Agony and the Ecstasy

DAY 18

Isaiah 27

Have you ever been in a relationship with someone who brought you great joy and love, as well as great pain?

1. What future day does Isaiah seem to be referring to here (v. 1)?
2. Verses 3-5 speak about a fruitful vineyard. What do you think this fruitful vineyard represents (see v. 6, also 5:1-7 and comment below)?
3. How could Israel avoid the coming punishment (v. 5)?
4. What would be the end of Israel's punishment (vs. 12-13)?

1. If you have children, have you ever had to discipline them for disobedience? How do you feel your children would rate you? (a) strong on discipline, weak on encouragement; (b) strong on encouragement, weak on discipline; (c) weak on encouragement, weak on discipline; (d) strong on encouragement, strong on discipline.

2. Do you need to grow more in the area of encouragement, or exercising discipline? Why?

*Commentators do not agree on the meaning of **Leviathan**. Some see three animals being discussed: the gliding serpent, the coiling serpent and the monster of the sea. They identify these as symbolic of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. Other commentators see Leviathan as a reference to a myth known throughout the ancient Semitic world. Isaiah may have used the name as a symbol of chaos and evil in the universe. Leviathan is also mentioned in Job 3:8 and Psalm 74:13-14. "A fruitful vineyard" (v. 2). In Isaiah 5:1-7, Israel is described as a vineyard to be destroyed, for it had not borne fruit. Yet here we see God, after he has disciplined Israel, making her a fruitful vineyard again.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

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Misplaced Pride

Isaiah 28

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever found yourself being ashamed of something you said or did of which you had actually once been proud?

DIGGING
into the Word

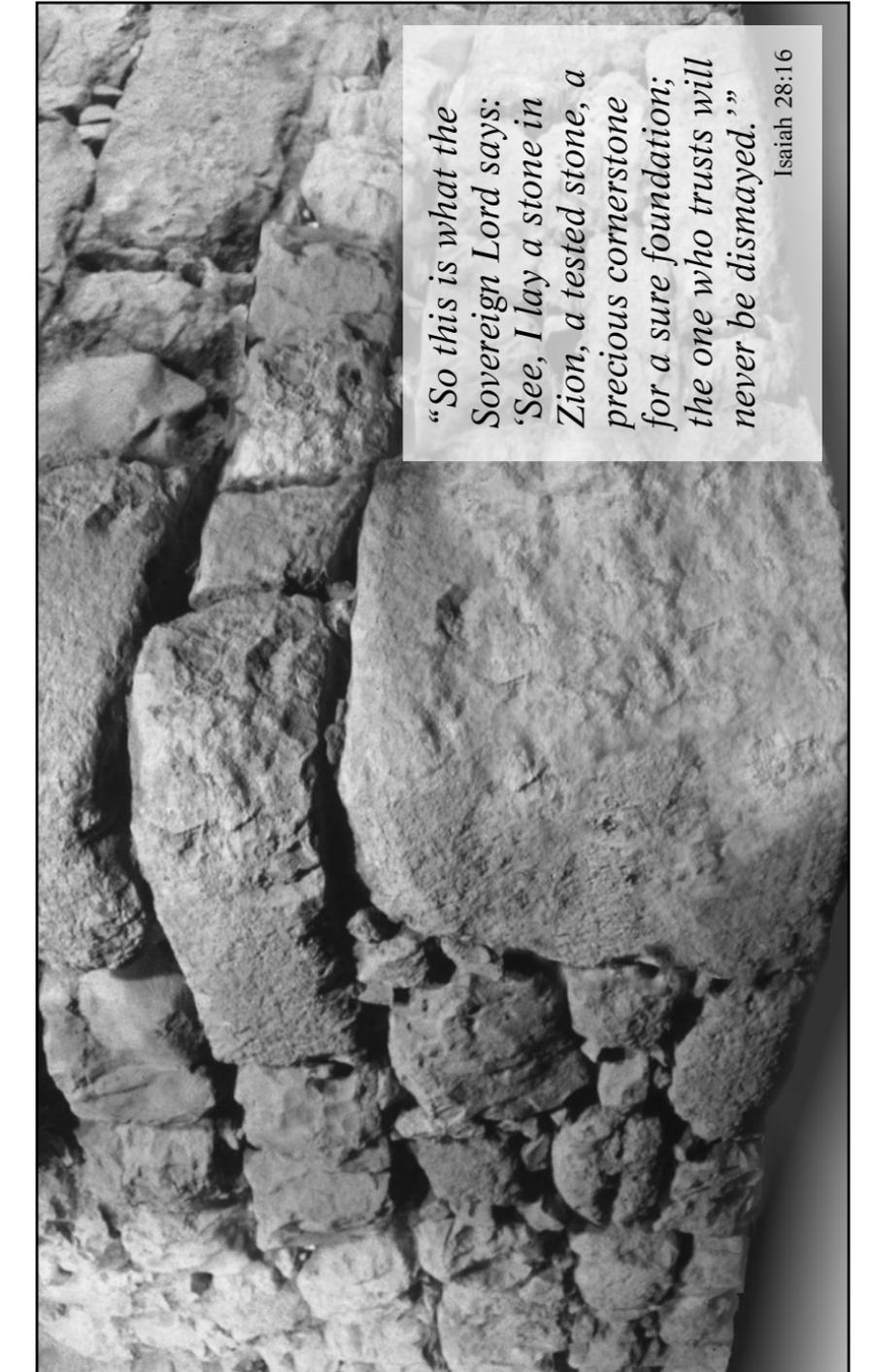
1. What did Isaiah mean when he called the pride of Israel (Ephraim) a “wreath” (v. 1)? What was Ephraim’s pride?
2. What would happen to Israel’s pride (vs. 3-4)?
3. What was the condition of Israel’s prophets and priests (vs. 7-10)?
4. What were the people of Jerusalem boasting of in Isaiah’s day (v. 15)?
5. Who is Isaiah referring to in verse 16 when he speaks of a *precious cornerstone* (1Pe 2:6-8)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Name three things in your life of which you can be justifiably proud.
2. What are several habits or activities that you used to be proud of, but of which you are now ashamed? What caused your change of thinking?

WINDOW
on the Word

In this passage, a **wreath** is a description of the beautiful city of Samaria. Israel was proud of Samaria. Modern excavations have confirmed the biblical description of the luxury and arrogance of the city. “**Do and do, do and do**” (v. 10). The priests and prophets replied to Isaiah angrily and accused him of treating them as children. They ridiculed his “baby talk.” “**A little here, a little there**” was a phrase describing the method of teaching little children. “**A covenant with death**” (v. 15). Death was personified as one of Israel’s many gods. Isaiah accuses the leaders of trusting in their idols of the underworld to save them.



*“So this is what the
Sovereign Lord says:
‘See, I lay a stone in
Zion, a tested stone, a
precious cornerstone
for a sure foundation;
the one who trusts will
never be dismayed.’”*

Isaiah 28:16

Is It Just a Dream?

Isaiah 29

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever experienced a dream so intense that you thought it was real? Was it a good dream or a bad dream?

DIGGING
into the Word

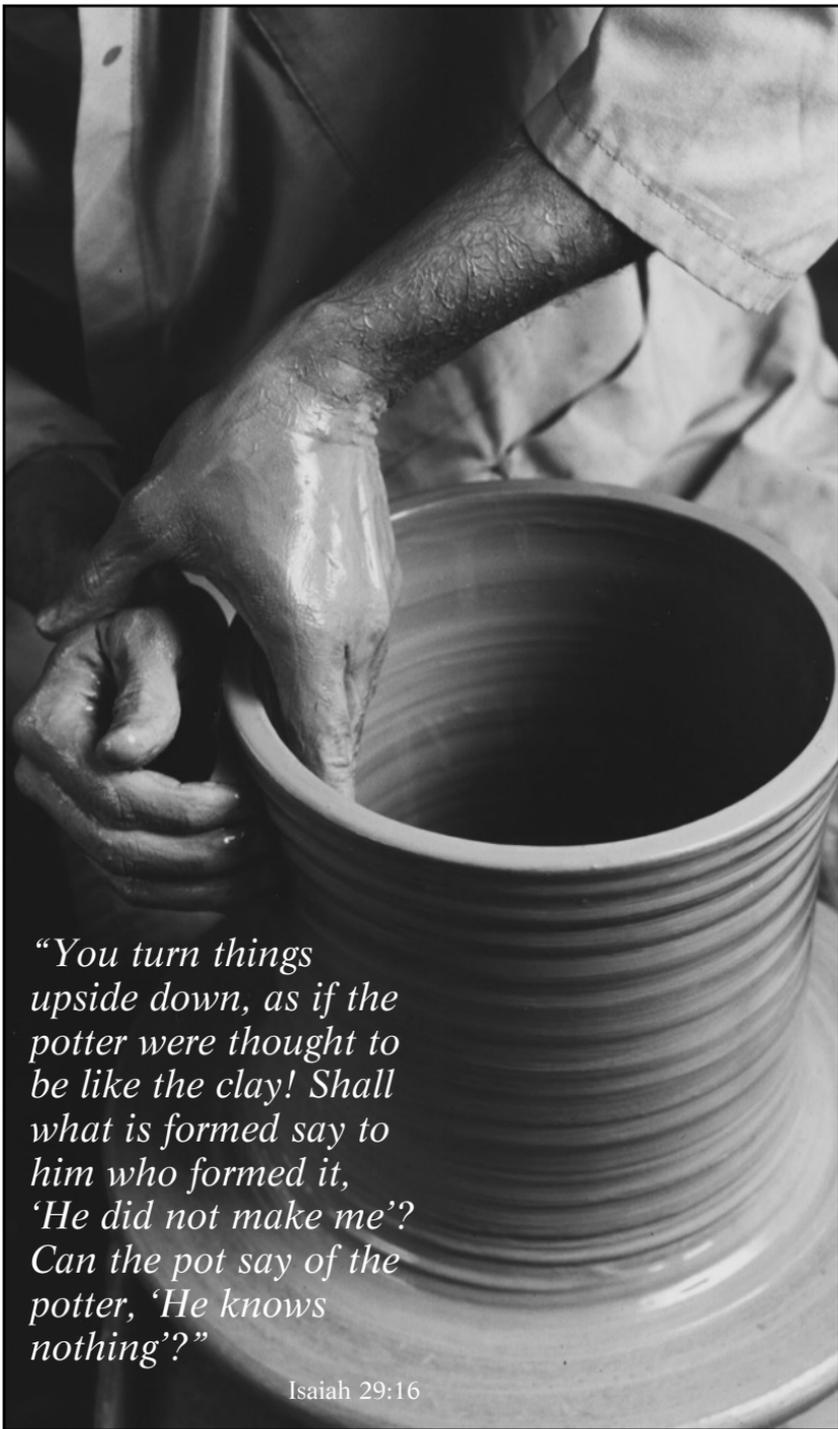
1. What did God promise he was going to do to the city of David in a few short years (vs. 2-4)?
2. In the midst of a coming siege, what was God going to do to Judah's enemies (vs. 5-8)?
3. What parts of the human body does God use to poetically describe Israel's hypocrisy (v. 13)?
4. Although Judah still had a semblance of worship for the Lord, how did God view it (v. 13)?
5. In verses 22-24, how did Isaiah foretell Israel's (Jacob's) attitude change?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What is your greatest struggle in worshipping God from the heart?
2. Can you think of some "man-made" rules that influence your own worship?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Ariel** refers to Jerusalem. Some say the word means "lion of God," referring to the power of the city. The word also sounds similar in Hebrew to "**altar hearth**" (v. 2). The city's condition would soon resemble that of the altar hearth, under siege with fighting and burning. In 701 B.C., Sennacherib sent his troops to take Jerusalem. They surrounded and besieged it. Though Sennacherib was the king of the Assyrians, it is clear that God was working through Sennacherib to accomplish his own purposes.*



*“You turn things
upside down, as if the
potter were thought to
be like the clay! Shall
what is formed say to
him who formed it,
‘He did not make me’?
Can the pot say of the
potter, ‘He knows
nothing’?”*

Isaiah 29:16

Disciplining the Strong-willed Child

Isaiah 30

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever asked advice from what turned out to be the wrong source? What were the results? What did the bad advice cost you? Did anyone else give you different advice?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. To what does God liken Judah because of her stubborn disobedience (v. 1)?
2. Where was Judah looking for help in the Assyrian siege and invasion (vs. 2-4)?
3. How much would Egypt help Israel when Assyria attacked them (vs. 4-7)? (a) quite a bit; (b) some, but not enough; (c) not very much; (d) very little if at all.
4. What behavior began to irk those in Judah, to the point that they asked the activity to stop (vs. 10-11)?
5. In verses 19-26, Isaiah speaks of a time when Jerusalem will faithfully worship God. While the language is figurative, speaking of spiritual blessings, do you think it also depicts a time of physical blessing and prosperity?
6. How would the Lord vanquish the Assyrians (v. 31)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. When was the last time you got bad advice?
2. Did you know of any scriptural truth that could have helped you ignore that bad advice?
3. What could you do differently in the future to keep from getting more bad advice (Jas 1:5-7)?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Egypt** was then a rapidly diminishing power and had little to offer Judah. But some from Judah still wanted to find their salvation from Egypt, rather than God. **Zoan** and **Hanes** (v. 4) were two Egyptian cities to which the Jews evidently sent a delegation to seek help. "**Rahab, the Do-Nothing**" (v. 7). In Canaanite literature, Rahab was the name of a female sea monster associated with Leviathan. Here, it might represent the hippopotamuses that often stay in the Nile doing nothing. This term (Rahab) was later used synonymously for Egypt.*