

gentleness but with firmness, and will bring His glorious purposes to pass.

Isaiah 29

It is doubtful whether there should be a chapter division between chapter 28 and chapter 29. The same message continues. Isaiah applies it to the city of Jerusalem, which he here calls by the mystic name of Ariel. He declares that Ariel is due to suffer trouble and difficulty, but not everlasting destruction. Verses 1-4 describe the city laid under siege, crushed almost to the ground, whispering out of the dust. Though the people kill sacrifices and go through all the forms of religion, honoring the Lord with their lips though their hearts are far from Him, it will not bring them any help; instead, they are to be crushed almost to the ground.

After this prediction of misery, we find a sharp change in verses 5-8. Although the Judeans are helpless to deliver themselves from the great number of the Assyrian invaders who are to come, God Himself is going to protect them. He is going to cause that the multitude of the terrible ones shall be like the chaff that passes away suddenly at an instant. The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel shall be like a dream of a night vision. It will seem to the Assyrian king just as it seems to a hungry man who has been sleeping and dreaming of a great feast and wakes up to find that he has nothing.

This prediction, as we know, was literally fulfilled. The fulfillment is described in Isaiah 37. There we find that the king, Sennacherib, who led his tremendous hosts against the land of Judah and expected to conquer Jerusalem without much difficulty, found it impossible because of the intervention of God. In one night the angel of the Lord killed great multitudes of his soldiers; when he awoke in the morning they were all dead men, and he had to return to Assyria empty-handed.

It has been made clear that this deliverance is not to be given because of any good deserts on the part of the Judean nobles, but because it is God's own purpose to protect Ariel. Verse 9 continues with his denunciation of the wickedness of the nobles. They are drunk with wine, but he points out that