

Isaiah 29:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

Analysis

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed וְתֵהִי לְכֶם פִּזְוָתִים בְּכָל קְדֻבָּרִים בְּסֶפֶר הַקְּתוּבִים (vatehi lakhem chazut hakol kedivrey hasefer hechatom)—all prophetic פִּזְוָת (chazut, vision) becomes like a sealed סֶפֶר (sefer, scroll/book). The verb חָתַם (chatam) means to seal, make inaccessible. **Which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed**—even the literate, the yodea sefer, one knowing books), cannot access it.

Isaiah illustrates comprehensive spiritual illiteracy. Not ignorance—the scroll exists, the learned person can read—but imposed inaccessibility. God's revelation is present but sealed, tantalizingly close yet unreachable. This is more frustrating than simple absence; it's revelation rendered useless by divine judgment. The tragedy: not lack of Scripture, but inability to comprehend it despite possessing it. Jesus quoted verse 13 when confronting Pharisees who studied Scripture yet missed its Author (Matthew 15:8-9).

Historical Context

Ancient scrolls were sealed with wax or clay impressions bearing a signet ring (Daniel 12:4, Revelation 5:1). Breaking the seal required authority. Isaiah's

metaphor: even with revelation physically present, spiritual blindness makes it as inaccessible as a sealed document. First-century Judaism possessed Scripture yet predominantly rejected Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can people possess Scripture yet find it 'sealed'—inaccessible despite availability?
2. What's the difference between intellectual knowledge of the Bible and spiritually discerning its truth?
3. When have you encountered passages that seemed 'sealed' until God opened your understanding?

Interlinear Text

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|------------------------|------------------|-------------|--|
| לֹכֶד מִוְתָה | וְצִוְתָה | בְּכָל | כְּדָבָרִי |
| H1961 | H0 | H3605 | of all is become unto you as the words |
| And the vision | | | H1697 |
| | H2380 | | |
| אֲשֶׁר | צִוְתִּים | יְתַבֵּן וְ | אֵל אַתָּה |
| which men deliver | | | H413 |
| H834 | | H5414 | H853 |
| of a book | for it is sealed | | |
| H5612 | H2856 | | |
| לְאָמֵר | הַסְּפָר | לְקֹרֶא | לְאָמֵר |
| saying | of a book | Read | saying |
| H559 | H5612 | H7121 | H3808 |
| to one that is learned | | | |
| H3045 | | | |
| הַוָּא: | | | |
| I cannot | for it is sealed | | |
| H3201 | H2856 | | |
| אֲזַכֵּר | צִוְתִּים | בְּכָל | אֲזַכֵּר |
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Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:11 (Parallel theme): He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Isaiah 8:16 (Word): Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

Daniel 12:4 (Word): But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Daniel 12:9 (Word): And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.