

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 28

Theme: First Israel and then Judah were to be judged, though differently, for rebellion and wickedness.

Outline:

- 1-4 Ephraim Mocked and to Be Destroyed
- 5-8 Judah Blessed, Preserved Temporarily
- 9-13 Judah's Rebellion Against Instruction
- 14-22 Judgment for Judah's Lying Scorners
- 23-29 God's Works Compared to Farming

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 7; Isaiah 8; Isaiah 9; Jeremiah 6.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 7* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-7.pdf>.
- B. *Exposition of Isaiah 8* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-8.pdf>.
- C. *Exposition of Isaiah 9* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-9.pdf>.
- D. *The Author of Confusion* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/god/is-god-the-author-of-confusion/sermon.php>.

Introduction:

- A. The chapters before (24-27) and after (30-31) seem different enough to put the two together (28-29).
- B. The chapter opens against Ephraim (Israel of the ten tribes) before their ruin by the coming Assyrians.
 - 1. Ahaz asked Tiglathpileser king of Assyria to help him against Ephraim and Syria (II Kgs 16:5-9).
 - 2. Shalmaneser king of Assyria came in Hezekiah's fourth to take Ephraim (II Kgs 17:1-6; 18:9-12).
 - 3. We understand the entirety of the chapter to refer to judgment by the Assyrians under Sennacherib.
- C. But the chapter quickly turns to Judah and Jerusalem and continues it into the next (Is 28:5,14; 29:1,8).
- D. Since the chapters before (24-27) were about Babylon and recovery from it, this moves back in time.
- E. Identify the main lessons and learn from them the wisdom God and Isaiah prophesied to two nations.
 - 1. Do you have the *glorious beauty* of Ephraim or the *crown of glory* and *diadem of beauty* of Judah.
 - 2. *Never despise the preaching of God's word*, no matter how elementary or simply you consider it.
 - 3. Take comfort that God's chastening, though angry and harsh, is *His strange work and strange act*.
 - 4. *Trust God's sovereign providence and wise chastening* like He gives men discretion with farming.

***** *Ephraim Mocked and to Be Destroyed – Verses 1-4* *****

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

- A. Isaiah announced that God would judge the ten tribes of Israel and their capital Samaria.
 - 1. Ten tribes of Israel rejected Rehoboam; this northern kingdom is called Ephraim.
 - 2. Ephraim, being the principle tribe of the ten, the name is often used instead of Israel.

3. God always favored Judah over Israel, for David's line in Judah and better kings.
 4. Instead of, *The burden of Ephraim*, he used a declaration of woe against the nation.
- B. Carefully note in this verse and the next three, the adjectives of Ephraim's arrogance.
1. They took great pride in the location chosen by Omri for this city (I Kgs 16:23-24).
 2. This capital city was their *crown of pride* – many national capitals are thought such.
 3. They considered Samaria a city of *glorious beauty*, in which they took great comfort.
 4. The Holy Spirit mocked their glorious beauty as a *fading flower* for its soon demise.
 5. Isaiah in the next two verses will describe Judah's relationship to Jehovah far better.
 6. Reader! What is your crown of pride? What do you think is your glorious beauty?
- C. Many take geographical pains to tell about Samaria, but they add little to the meaning.
1. Samaria was likely located on an elevation in a valley with surrounding mountains.
 2. The descriptive words *crown, glorious beauty, fat valleys* are of kingdom prosperity.
 3. The moral language uses *pride, drunkards, and overcome with wine* for their sins.
 4. The indictment includes *woe and fading flower* for what would become of Ephraim.
- D. Pride and drunkenness cause men to think too highly of themselves and their abilities.
1. A proud person presumes he is better than others; booze loosens restraint of pride.
 2. They thought themselves special and beyond the reach of punishment. Oh, so wrong!
 3. The Lord inspired an exclamation mark to note the certainty of the coming judgment.
- E. For much more about the terrible sin of pride (slides) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/pride.pdf>.

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

- A. In contrast to Ephraim's pride and prosperity, God had a mighty and strong punisher!
1. This is the powerful kings of Assyria from Tiglathpileser to Shalmaneser to Sargon.
 2. Shalmaneser laid siege to Samaria/Israel and deported the people (II Kgs 18:9-12).
 3. See the introduction at the beginning of this chapter and previous chapters (Is 7-9).
- B. The Assyrians, with their capital on the Tigris River, were like a great river (Is 8:5-8).
1. The destroying terms in this verse are horrible for the ten tribes in their profane pride.
 2. What is a flower like after a tempest of hail, destroying storm, overflowing flood?
- C. What you take pride in and think to be glorious beauty, God can and will destroy it.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

- A. The Assyrian kings in several expeditions trampled Israel (ten tribes) down to oblivion.
- B. God promised to punish Ephraim (ten tribes) until they were not a people (Isaiah 7:8).
- C. They were deported to Assyria and others were put in their homes (II Kings 17:20-24).

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

- A. Ephraim's geographical blessings and prosperity would fade like a flower or early fruit.
 - 1. The *glorious beauty* on the *head of the fat valley* is Samaria and its great location.
 - 2. Flowers are beautiful, and so was Ephraim, but enemies would destroy it like fading.
 - 3. First fruit early in the season is a tempting thing that excites greed to devour it fast.
 - 4. Fig trees of Palestine grow one batch of figs in May/June and another in Aug/Sep.
 - 5. God would send the Assyrians to fade Samaria's flower and to greedily consume it.
- B. How long does the average flower last? Only days. Ephraim's glory would soon end.
- C. How long does early fruit on a tree last? Only days. Time without it demands eating it.

***** Judah Blessed, Preserved Temporarily – Verses 5-8 *****

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

- A. Here is a contrast between the glory of Ephraim and the glory of Judah. Praise Jehovah!
 - 1. The first four verses were obviously about Ephraim by name and specific repetition.
 - 2. This verse is a switch to *the residue of His people* – the rest of the Israelites – Judah.
 - 3. No part of Israel is described with terms like these – this is Jerusalem and His Zion.
 - 4. Israel was totally taken captive into Assyria and other places while Judah remained.
- B. Therefore, this blessed time occurred during the reign of good king Hezekiah in Judah.
 - 1. Israel was taken captive during the reign of the wise and strong Hezekiah over Judah.
 - 2. Hezekiah was one of Judah's four greatest kings, and God blessed them by His favor.
 - 3. He started a revival and after his recovery and Assyria's defeat, all nations sent gifts.
- C. Carefully note in this verse against the first four, the nouns of Judah's favor – *crown of glory* and *diadem of beauty*, because the Spirit is mocking Ephraim's pride (Is 28:1-4).
 - 1. Samaria and Ephraim had a crown of pride in natural prosperity. What cheapness!
 - 2. Their crown was no crown, their glory no glory, and their beauty only fading vanity.
- D. The LORD Jehovah was the glorious crown of Judah and beautiful diadem for the Jews.
 - 1. Do not sell yourself so cheap that you think a mere flower is a crown for your pride.
 - 2. Men receive glory and verbally glory in wisdom, might, and/or riches (Jer 9:23-24).
 - 3. What is the beautiful diadem or crowning jewel of your life? Wisdom, might, riches?
 - 4. Do not measure your life by anything else than your relationship and fruit with God.
- E. What is your *crown of glory* (crown of pride)? Your *diadem of beauty* (glorious beauty)?
 - 1. It is crucial to ask the question, even more crucial to answer honestly and objectively.
 - 2. For what do you think you are special? What is your cheap flower and early fruit?
 - 3. Wise men will make God their exceeding great reward and nothing else (Gen 15:1).
 - 4. Wise men will know that delighting in God is the greatest use of a life (Jer 9:23-24).

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

- A. Beyond crown of glory and diadem of beauty, God gives judgment to fulfill any office.
 - 1. *The spirit of judgment* is wisdom and understanding for those that must lead others.
 - 2. Solomon prayed for this great blessing and obtained it, and Ephraim had none of it.
- B. Beyond crown of glory and diadem of beauty, God gives strength to defeat enemies.
 - 1. *Turning the battle to the gate* is strongly repelling a foe to their cities (II Sam 11:23).
 - 2. No enemy could resist Judah (II Kings 18:8), but Ephraim was taken to the ground.
- C. If you make God your reward and refuge, you will be glorious, safe, great, and mighty.
 - 1. No dilemma can stop you in any real way, if the LORD of hosts is with you (Ja 1:5).
 - 2. No enemy can touch you in any real way, if the LORD of hosts is with you (Is 54:17).
 - 3. David declared he could run through troops and leap walls by His God (Ps 18:29).
 - 4. David declared he was safe from trouble by making God his refuge (Psalm 91:1-16).
 - 5. For more about Psalm 18 ... <https://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/psalm-18.pdf>.
 - 6. For more about Psalm 91 ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/psalm-91/sermon.php>.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

- A. God favored Judah (Is 28:5-6), but they were guilty of Israel's sins and would be judged.
 - 1. The drunkenness God condemned Israel for was the same sin Judah had (Is 28:1-4).
 - 2. This sin of the Jews is mentioned elsewhere (Hos 3:1; 4:11-12; Joel 1:5; Amos 6:6).
 - 3. Rulers, whether ecclesiastical or civil, should fear alcohol (Lev 10:8-11; Pr 31:4-5).
 - 4. So in the N.T. deacons are warned about much wine and bishops wine (I Tim 3:3,8).
 - 5. Therefore, due to the greatness of this sin, Judah also would be judged (Is 28:14-22).
- B. God's wisdom can be sacrificed to folly by booze (Pr 23:33; Hosea 7:5; Eccl 10:16-17).
 - 1. Note the charges of *erring, being out of the way, err in vision, stumble in judgment*.
 - 2. Alcohol relaxes the central nervous system and steals a person's wits and reflexes.
 - 3. God can give the spirit of judgment (Is 28:6) and a man lose it by wine (Pr 31:4-5).
- C. God will also charge Judah with moral and religious sleep like drunkards (Is 29:9-10).
 - 1. There is little to no reason to take the words against Israel or here as mere metaphors.
 - 2. Metaphors are usually indicated by comparison (Is 19:14; 29:9; 51:21; 23:9; 51:7).
 - 2. Isaiah identified literal drunkenness elsewhere (Isaiah 5:22-23; 22:13-14; 56:10-12).

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

- A. Drunkenness causes vomiting (Is 19:14) and other careless conduct leaving filthiness.
- B. The evidence of drunkenness by many segments of Judah's leaders was in most places.
- C. Isaiah's indictment of Judah includes the depth of their depravity and also its breadth.

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

- A. First set the context of this section, for it must not be isolated for use outside its context.
1. This is a chapter of judgment by the Assyrians, first of Ephraim and then of Judah.
 2. Judah is a bunch of drunkards in the preceding context, deserving Ephraim's ruin.
 3. Judah is a bunch of scornful mockers in the following context, deserving judgment.
 4. This section must not be taught for its sound, just like the last section (Is 28:23-29).
 5. The last section has God's rule of intelligence/inventions, but that is not its purpose.
- B. This section is a different and further crime of Judah before their judgment is declared.
1. Some have used the verses as divine rules of hermeneutics or homiletics (I Cor 2:13).
 2. They make *precept* God's rules ... *line* Bible verses ... *here a little* for hunting verses.
 3. They make verses 10 and 13 here to be inspired advice for Bible topical preaching.
 4. But Isaiah did not give prophets advice for better hermeneutics or better homiletics.
 5. The context is sin and judgment; the content mocks prophets for childish delivery.
 6. It is a shame some love sound of a text more than its sense (Neh 8:8; II Tim 2:15).
 7. We once quoted these sound bites as if profitable, but we have not for decades now.
 8. Do not resent the effort to refute heresy – we had to also do it before (Is 14:12-14).
- C. These words can easily be scoffing, scornful ridicule of the prophets and their warnings.
1. Is God asking Hezekiah about Isaiah? Or is Hezekiah asking God about Isaiah?
 2. Or are the Jews mocking Isaiah and the other prophets for their child-like warnings?
 3. They might mock, Who do these prophets think we are, only newly-weaned infants?
 4. They might say, These prophets use the same methods our nannies use with infants.
 5. Isaiah's word of judgment for Judah calls them scorners and mockers (Is 28:14,22).
 6. Isaiah is not sincerely asking a class at the prophets' college for the age of learning.
 7. The answer proves it – doctrine is far above such infants (I Cor 3:1-2; 13:11; 14:20).
 8. The response proves it – they received teaching as defined by answer – but no profit.
 9. How can these two questions be sincere inquiry by God or Isaiah, given this answer?
 10. This is not Isaiah applying Peter's exhortation for babes to desire milk (I Peter 2:2).
 11. The following description is how young children are taught elementary school facts.
 12. Infant children are taught little amounts at different times (*a little here; a little there*).
 13. Infant children must have precepts one by one repeated over and over for learning.
 14. Infant children must hear one line after another to copy it and over and over again.
 15. The men of Judah rejected God's warnings for the method next described (Is 28:10).
 16. If the method next described is inspired technical teaching genius, why total failure?
 17. Since the Jews received the prophets just as stated (v.13 to v.10), it cannot be sincere.
 18. If meant sincerely or positively, the given age is very limited in meat (Heb 5:12-14).
 19. Those exalting Hebrew claim the words of verses 10 and 13 rhyme in clear ridicule.
 20. And God told Ezekiel the Jews did speak against him like this here (Ezek 33:30-33).
 21. David (actually Jesus) was the song of drunkards, so why not prophets (Ps 69:12)?

22. This section could be God mocking if there are any weaned to learn ... but less likely.
- D. Or the words here are sincere methods to teach infant children the rudiments of learning.
1. If the next verse is not ridicule of prophets but meant sincerely, it is still child rules.
 2. Due to the question and its answer here, the description following is to teach infants.
 3. The verse following cannot be changed from teaching infants to teaching preachers.
 4. The people received the prophets exactly as defined (v.13), but it did them no good.
 5. Therefore, this elementary form and method of instruction had in it their destruction.
 6. Though for the sake of sincerity we take verse 10 positively, it had no benefit to any.
 7. Why did they reject offers of rest and refreshment (v.12), with the inspired method?
 8. If this here is for infantile Jews needing truth, why did the given method not work?
 9. Because the use of parables, like Jesus with the Jews, was offensive to His hearers.
 10. Because the use of hard things, like Jesus with Jews, was offensive to His hearers.
 11. Because the given childish method, like Paul with Greeks, was offensive to hearers.
 12. Since they were a nation of drunkards, God's prophets must teach them like children.
 13. So, the method given here and rejected by them was like Paul (I Co 1:17-24; 2:1-5).
 14. How does the following verse fit, unless to play off their rejection of childish speech?
 15. God called them rebellious lying *children* for demanding smooth things (Is 30:8-11).
- E. There is no reason verses 10 and 13 are divine genius for hermeneutics or homiletics.
1. To steal the words from teaching letters and arithmetic to infants has no justification.
 2. Without much clarification, the words stolen from nannies have precious little value.
 3. Do not let the cool *sound* of words corrupt sober minds that should demand the *sense*.
 4. Of course God's ministers love to pile up precepts for God's people, but is that here?
 5. Of course God's ministers love to read line after line of Bible text, but is that here?
 6. Of course God's ministers pull topical verses from all over the Bible, but is that here?
 7. Context, content, and intent must rule interpretation, not cool adaptation of words.
 8. False adaptation of words genders heresies e.g. Nephilim in Gen 6:1-4, Satan in Isaiah 14:12-14, second coming in Matthew 16:27-28, baptism in John 3:5, etc., etc.
 9. How does the following verse fit, unless to play off their rejection of childish speech?
 10. The result, no benefit, was by the prescribed method, like parables (Matt 10:13-17).
 11. Parables, God's chosen method for blind Jews, is not divine wisdom for preachers.
 12. Ministers must use great plainness of speech, not the blinding methods even of Jesus.
- F. Let us summarize the intent of the section, which is to further condemn Judah to its ruin.
1. The prophets simply warned them and offered them rest – but they would not hear.
 2. If sarcastic ridicule here, the Jews mocked prophets for their simplistic preaching.
 3. If sincere child methods here, the Jews rejected the prophets for their simplistic style.
 4. The Jews rejected Hebrew, so God brought foreign armies speaking their languages.
 5. They rejected warnings, so like drunks they fell backward to be taken by the enemy.

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

- A. For a complete discussion of this verse and those following it, see the notes for verse 9.

- B. This is not an inspired rule of hermeneutics or homiletics; it mocks effective preaching.
 1. This verse is rather a detailed description of teaching infant children for its ridicule.
 2. Infant children are taught little amounts at different times (*a little here; a little there*).
 3. Infant children must have precepts (facts, rules) repeated over and over for learning.
 4. Infant children must hear one line at a time to copy it or repeat it over and over again.
 5. It could not work with children, for children cannot learn doctrine. Check the Bible.
 6. It is mocking; it could not teach children truth; it did not work but rather condemned.
- C. The simplicity of content and presentation make carnal men mock God's ministers.
- D. They are not entertainers, and with Paul's lead, they dumb their message down to basics.

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

- A. Judah rejected prophets in Hebrew, so foreign armies would come with their languages.
 1. They did like plain and simple warnings, so He would send very difficult language.
 2. God promised and He certainly did in this case – He scorned the scorers (Pr 3:34).
 3. God promised and He surely did in this case – be froward to the froward (Ps 18:26).
- B. Isaiah's intent here is a terrible warning about the speech of Assyrians and Babylonians.
 1. Moses had promised this as one of the punishments for Israel's sins (Deut 28:49).
 2. Jeremiah would speak of the Babylonians fulfilling this warning of Moses (Jer 5:15).
 3. But Isaiah illustrated it by the Assyrians, who spoke in Syrian (Isaiah 33:19; 36:11).
- C. Paul used this text for foreign languages are for unbelievers (I Cor 14:21-22; Acts 2:13).

12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

- A. This was the good word of God – the knowledge and doctrine they needed to escape.
 1. He offered them rest, for they were constantly troubled by invaders and threats of it.
 2. He offered them refreshment from their fears and wars by preaching of the prophets.
- B. But they rejected Him – rising up early and sending many messengers (Jer 6:16; 35:15).
 1. God gave them great things of His law, but they counted it as strange (Hosea 8:12).
 2. Ezekiel's pleasant sound gathered them together, but no obedience (Ezek 33:30-33).
 3. God will only allow rejection of His warnings for a while (Prov 29:1; Rev 2:20-23).
 4. He will reach the end of merciful patience – prepare to meet thy God (Amos 4:12).
- C. They would not hear – hear with obedience – for they wickedly rejected the warnings.
 1. They demanded smooth things, not warnings requiring repentance (Isaiah 30:8-11).
 2. The sin problem and man's depravity is a matter of the will – he will not hear God.
 3. God clearly revealed Himself to all men by creation, but they reject it (Ro 1:18-32).
 4. Though we believe total depravity, it is a matter of man's will more than his ability.

13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

- A. For a complete discussion of this verse and those preceding it, see the notes for verse 9.
- B. The Jews considered the prophets' warnings as mere childish instruction beneath them.
 - 1. Yet, the way the Jews received the warnings was exactly as prescribed (Is 29:9-10).
 - 2. Therefore, if sincere and positive throughout this section, the method was to blind.
 - 3. God gave them great things of His law, but they counted it as strange (Hosea 8:12).
 - 4. The result, no benefit, was by the prescribed method, like parables (Matt 10:13-17).
 - 5. Parables, God's chosen method for blind Jews, is not divine wisdom for preachers.
 - 6. Paul also dumbed his preaching down to offend blind Greeks (I Cor 1:17-24; 2:1-5).
 - 7. They thought Paul's preaching foolish for its lack of rhetorical appeal and content.
- C. The effect and result of such preaching methods was to further blind these sottish Jews.
 - 1. They were drunkards, so God had them fall backward and stumble like drunkards.
 - 2. God had told Isaiah at his commissioning that his preaching would blind (Is 6:9-13).
 - 3. God sent prophets to warn them and bring His judgments upon them (Hosea 6:4-7).
 - 4. Parables, God's chosen method for blind Jews, is not divine wisdom for preachers.
 - 5. As Paul explained, he triumphed even if it was *death unto death* (II Cor 2:14-17).
 - 6. God is Author of Confusion (blinding) and Author of Judgment (Assyria/Chaldea).
- D. Author of Confusion ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/god/is-god-the-author-of-confusion/sermon.php>.

***** *Judgment for Judah's Lying Scorners – Verses 14-22* *****

14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

- A. There is likely *scorn* and *mockery* in the previous section by this and later (Isaiah 28:22).
 - 1. They rejected the prophets' warnings and are describers as *scorners* and *mockers*.
 - 2. Whether entirely scornful or partially scornful, the previous section was rebellion.
 - 3. There is definite scorn and mockery in this section against His warnings (Is 28:15).
- B. This section is to the *rulers* of the Jews – ecclesiastical and civil – from earlier (Is 28:7).
- C. *Wherefore* ... or other times *therefore* ... is the certain result of rejecting God's offers.
 - 1. There is a certain and sure cause and effect rule in the Bible for those rejecting Him.
 - 2. Since they did not want to hear His preachers (Is 28:9-13), He had a word for them.
 - 3. They could have had rest by His blessing (Is 28:12), but now they will be consumed.
 - 4. Because they scorned and mocked the warnings with a covenant and lies (Is 28:15).
 - 5. Be sure your sin will find you out (outline) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/be-sure-your-sin4.pdf>.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

- A. This sarcastic ridicule of their rejection of His warnings is powerfully sublime and evil.
 - 1. We do not have to take these words extending beyond the implication of their deeds.
 - 2. Compare other similar implied speech (Is 5:18-19; Jer 7:8-11; Zep 1:12; Mal 1:6-7).
 - 3. By all apparent measures of their obstinate rebellion, they would be perfectly safe.
 - 4. It is not ordinary for men, even evil men, to be so arrogantly sure of death and lies.
 - 5. Jeremiah sentenced judgment on the Jews for their thoughts of rebellion (Jer 6:19).
 - 6. But given the iniquity of the Jews, some or all of the words could be mocking Isaiah.
- B. The wicked Jews were so sure of safety as if by covenant, agreement, prophecy, hiding.
 - 1. They mocked death and hell (grave) as if they had a covenant agreement with both.
 - 2. They were certain the overflowing river of Assyria would not reach them (Is 8:7-8).
 - 3. We trust in our lies of peace for our refuge and hiding place (Jer 4:10; 8:11; 23:17).
- C. But God had the opposite news for them – total consumption – based on His sureness.

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

- A. This is an unusual place for this verse about Jesus, but not without precedent (I Pet 2:6).
 - 1. A precedent case is the insertion of I Peter 2:8 in a warning about Assyria (Is 8:14).
 - 2. A precedent case is the insertion of Immanuel (Mat 1:23) about Assyria (Is 7:13-14).
 - 3. For much more about the Stone Christ ... <https://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/first-peter-two.pdf>.
- B. Contrary to the lies of the Jews for peace, God had a promise of the greatest magnitude.
 - 1. His great promise was a coming King He had already foretold (Is 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:10).
 - 2. The certainty of this great event depended on the zeal of the LORD of hosts (Is 9:7).
 - 3. Therefore, the Jews would not all be destroyed, for the Son of David would come.
 - 4. Therefore, those that would trust His prophets would be preserved from judgment.
 - 5. In days of the Roman Empire the God of heaven set up a kingdom ruled by Jesus.
- C. By comparing scripture, believers *not making haste* will not be *confounded* (I Pet 2:6).
 - 1. When you are hasty, you will be ashamed, for haste makes waste (Prov 18:13; etc.).
 - 2. When you are ashamed of trusting a thing that does not work, it confounds your plan.
 - 3. The connection of *ashamed* and *confounded* is elsewhere in Isaiah (Is 24:23; 41:11).
 - 4. Therefore, by God's inspired commentary, we easily see not confounded (I Pet 2:6).
- D. The certainty of a far greater and distant event was to convince Jews of future judgment.

17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

- A. In addition to His sure kingdom purpose ... *also* ... His overflowing scourge must come.
- B. His judgment would be carefully calculated and properly measured for precise results.
- C. Their confidence in lies and any hiding places would be swept away by hail and a flood.
- D. Ephraim would get terrible hail, a destroying storm, and a flood (Is 28:2), now Judah.

18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

- A. Their foolish covenant would be disannulled; their agreement with hell would not stand.
- B. Any thought of escaping the overflowing scourge was wrong; it would trod them down.
- C. This is the army of Sennacherib, and these princes or rulers were of the many killed.

19 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

- A. When God would initiate the judgment, it would surely arrive and destroy these Jews.
 - 1. It would constantly hail, rain, flood, a metaphor of water, to destroy much of Judah.
 - 2. There would be no relief in the morning, as many desire during a storm at night.
- B. Merely hearing a report of the approaching army would cause vexation to the confident.
 - 1. The Assyrians were cruel and used many tortures to induce surrender and/or loyalty.
 - 2. If you think peace and prosperity will stay while sinning, He will tear you (Ps 50:22).
 - 3. God loves to send fear into those confident of lies (Pr 1:26-27; Is 21:4; 24:17-18).

20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

- A. Whatever they had put their confidence in would not nearly be enough to protect them.
 - 1. If it were their fenced cities, Sennacherib took them very easily right up to Jerusalem.
 - 2. If it were the Egyptians and/or Ethiopians, they were soundly defeated by this king.
- B. The inspired prophet used two disappointing and frustrating metaphors of their defeat.
 - 1. A seven-foot man in a six-foot bed cannot find comfort, peace, rest, or good sleep.
 - 2. A sheet only a few feet wide is not enough to tuck around a body for similar comfort.
- C. The similitude is simple – ideas and efforts for safety were inadequate and insufficient.

21 For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

- A. Jehovah, after much mercy, after destroying Israel for an example, would judge in fury.
 - 1. David crushed the Philistines at Baalperazim (II Samuel 5:17-21; I Chron 14:8-12).
 - 2. Note the reason for the name – *the LORD hath broken forth like the breach of waters*.
 - 3. Judah said the overflowing scourge would not get them – but its name (Is 28:17-18)!
 - 4. David crushed the Philistines again at Gibeon (II Sam 5:22-25; I Chron 14:13-17).
 - 5. Joshua crushed the Amorites at Gibeon with sun and hail (Joshua 10:6-14). Amen!
- B. For the LORD Jehovah treating His beloved Judah like Philistines was indeed *strange*.
 - 1. The God of Jacob would be wroth against Judah like previously against Philistines.
 - 2. The wicked do not respond to modest punishment, so they are destroyed (Is 26:11).
 - 3. God modifies punishment in chastening so as to keep from destroying (Is 27:7-8).
 - 4. Our God does not afflict willingly; He loves mercy (La 3:33; Mic 7:18; Ezek 33:11).
 - 5. He pities His children like a good father and is only forced to chastening by our sins.
- C. His strange work and act of chastening was like farmers' wise discretion (Is 28:23-29).
 - 1. The end result of His wrath against the Philistines was far different than to Judah.
 - 2. He would chasten them with a positive goal in mind and bring them to great revival.
 - 3. His chastening, very severe, like death at Corinth, proved salvation (I Cor 11:30-32).

22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

- A. His kind warning! Unless you want to be bound up even worse, stop your evil mocking.
- B. Isaiah's earlier prophecy about Sennacherib used very similar terminology (Is 10:23).
- C. The inspired facts show Judah mocked His messengers before Babylon (II Chr 36:16).
- D. Reader! We also have heard God's determined judgment on saints and sinners. Beware!
 - 1. He will judge His people; Corinth and other churches are examples (Heb 10:26-31).
 - 2. He will judge the world; we ought to live in light of that great day (II Peter 3:10-14).

***** *God's Works Compared to Farming – Verses 23-29* *****

23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

- A. In dramatic fashion, Isaiah by the Holy Spirit asks for your attention for a great lesson.
 - 1. Why all the fuss about a few verses pertaining to farming? Why? Then look deeper!
 - 2. This little section almost deserves its own chapter to keep our attention for a lesson.
 - 3. But since it helps explain things in context, it is perfect here (Isaiah 28:5-7,17,21,22).

- B. Summing up this chapter's promises of good and bad, Isaiah asks the faithful to listen.
1. He had moved from judging Ephraim and blessing sinful Judah to judging Judah.
 2. He will show God wonderful in counsel and excellent in working to agrarian people.
 3. God has given farmers great discretion and prudence to deal with each plant/product.
 4. It is fascinating how farmers chose grains and preparation and processing methods.
 5. Each plant is valued differently and planted, harvested, and processed differently.
 6. God likewise is very discreet in treating each nation and person just right for profit.
 7. He never crushes any that deserve or need a spanking; He waits for perfect timing.
 8. His judgment of Judah was carefully measured with line and plummet (Isaiah 28:17).
 9. World and personal events are not chance or random at all; all men need this lesson.
- C. This description here of farming wisdom and discretion is to explain God's providence.
1. Agricultural science is briefly explained here in a few words ... and its divine source.
 2. Men use *different methods* ... in *different seasons* ... for *different grains* for max gain.
 3. Men did not learn agricultural genius by trial and error but rather by God's kind gift.
 4. To the Jews with intimate knowledge of farming by all, the metaphor is incredible.
 5. Men carefully prepare, plant, harvest, and process ... so God wisely deals with each.
 6. Like with a farmer, the timing and treatment for each plant is perfect, so with God.
 7. He only expects fruit where He has planted; he never chastens worse than the crime.
- D. God promised honor and kindness (Is 28:5-6); He promised punishment (Is 28:14-22).
1. He was wroth with the sinners of Ephraim and threw them out of His sight forever.
 2. He was wroth with the sinners of Judah and would punish, but it was an unusual act.
 3. His wrath to crush a people was usually for enemies like Philistines (Is 28:21-22).
 4. The Jews needed to know His wisdom of all nations made His acts perfectly right.
 5. No nation or church or person is ever unfairly or unwisely treated, but all perfectly.
- E. For the LORD Jehovah treating His beloved Judah like Philistines was indeed *strange*.
1. The God of Jacob would be wroth against Judah like previously against Philistines.
 2. The wicked do not respond to modest punishment, so they are destroyed (Is 26:11).
 3. God modifies His chastening so as to keep from destroying us (Isaiah 27:7-8; 57:16).
 4. Our God does not afflict willingly; He loves mercy (La 3:33; Mic 7:18; Ezek 33:11).
 5. He pities His children like a good father and is only forced to chastening by our sins.
- F. We sometimes use this section for God's providence in nations and their level of genius.
1. Twice Isaiah reminds us that the farming genius of men is from God (Is 28:26,29).
 2. If we look through the world, national farming ability varies from zero to very great.
 3. God makes differences in the animal kingdom, and He does with nations (Job 39:17).
 4. Some are so deprived they throw boomerangs at rabbits or blow darts at monkeys; their weapons might be noted, but our archery, traps, guns, cameras, drones trump.
 5. The tools of modern farming and all other trades are very incredible gifts of genius.
 6. Necessity is the mother of invention, but some nations have never invented anything.
 7. Recognizing these differences confirms His sovereign power over the lives of men.
 8. God told the Jews to look at their national borders and see differences (Mal 1:4-5).
 9. Therefore, we should praise Him and give thanks for any ability and its profitability.
 10. Make light of Proverbs 14:4 and its application to PTOs at your own peril and ruin.

11. Therefore, learn creative tools and use them (Prov 8:12; Eccl 10:10; II Samuel 1:18).
 12. For exposition of Proverbs 8:12 ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/08_12.php.
 13. For exposition of Proverbs 14:4 ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/14_04.php.
 14. For exposition of Eccl 10:10 ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/ecclesiastes-book-format.pdf>.
- G. God never makes a mistake by mistreating a nation or person in any treatment or timing.
1. He will pity some more than He will others (Ps 103:13-14; Isaiah 57:16; Jer 30:11).
 2. He will also judge, but in His timing (Nu 32:23; Ps 50:21; Je 50:33-34; Na 1:12-14).
 3. Men should never presume on His timing in any direction contrary to His revelation.
 4. The reward for both the righteous and the wicked will surely come and be perfect.

24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. The emphasis here is *all day* and *to sow*. Farmers do not take one step without the next.
1. The beautiful similitude begins with plowing, which is the crucial preparatory work.
 2. A farmer does not plow all day, but he will rather plow a while and then plant seeds.
 3. Does a farmer plow as an end in itself? Just tearing up ground? No, he wants to sow.
 4. The second clause does not have the words *to sow*, but why does he break the clods?
 5. Farmers do not do the same thing always; they change tactics in the pursuit of fruit.
- C. The farmer only plows to open the earth and break clods of dirt for the goal of sowing.
- D. God does not chasten or punish without a further goal in mind that leads to profitability.
- E. He has perfect plans in store for you as He prepares ... just like He did Israel and Judah.

25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. As soon as the farmer has his field soil turned and smooth, he will wisely plant his seeds.
1. It is not the goal or purpose to examine each of these nouns and verbs in great depth.
 2. The real lesson here is not agricultural genius, which is obvious, but His chastening.
 3. The steps described here are preparatory and sowing – the first part of good farming.
- C. The fields must be made plain and smooth for maximum yield and ease of next steps.
1. **Fitches.** Vetch, the plant *Vicia sativa*, or its seed, an herb in the buttercup family used as forage; it was sown broadcast and grows in the wild in Israel; its seed pods were beaten out with staffs to separate black seeds like pepper used for seasoning.
 2. **Cummin.** Cumin, the plant *Cummin Cyminum* resembling fennel: used in the Middle East for its fruit or seed, which possesses aromatic and carminative qualities. It also was sown broadcast, and was beaten with a rod when ripe to detach its seeds.
 3. Both fitches and cummin are cast abroad or scattered; they are not carefully planted.

4. The other grains are carefully planted or raked into the soil, in rows, or other ways.
 5. Why is wheat called *principal wheat*? Because it was the primary grain most used.
 6. Why is barley called *appointed barley*? Because it was the best seed for producing.
 7. Why are they cast *in their place*? Because each grain had its own space (Lev 19:19).
- D. God knows each nation (or church or person) and deals precisely as they need working.
1. He does not treat every person the same – not at all – for they are not created equal.
 2. He loves some persons (His elect) and others with only natural favor (reprobates).
 3. He is not always plowing; there is a time to sow; there is a time to harvest/process.
 4. What is true today (God plowing) will not be true tomorrow (God sowing or other).

26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. Thus far ... preparation and planting for first half ... then harvesting and processing next.
- C. This agricultural wisdom and farming genius is by God, like witty inventions (Pr 8:12).
1. Men did not learn ordinary farming by trial and error but by His internal revelation.
 2. Though God does use experience to teach men, as archery to David (II Samuel 1:18).
 3. Necessity is the mother of invention, but some nations have never invented anything.
 4. Alexander Bell, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford were provoked internally by God.

27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. Now ... harvesting and processing for the second half ... after plowing and planting seed.
- C. Harvest and processing are not the same for fitches and cummin as they are for grain.
1. **Fitches.** Vetch, the plant *Vicia sativa*, or its seed, an herb in the buttercup family used as forage; it was sown broadcast and grows in the wild in Israel; its seed pods were beaten out with staffs to separate black seeds like pepper used for seasoning.
 2. **Cummin.** Cumin, the plant *Cummin Cyminum* resembling fennel: used in the Middle East for its fruit or seed, which possesses aromatic and carminative qualities. It also was sown broadcast, and was beaten with a rod when ripe to detach its seeds.
 3. Severe methods of separating seeds will not work on small, tender plants (Deu 25:4).
 4. A heavy sledge or dray need not be drawn over them ... a little beating will do it.
 5. Using severe methods would be abusive and counterproductive for plant and farmer.
- D. God never chastens past what fits the crime or what helps (Ps 103:13-14; I Cor 10:13).

28 Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. Oxen treaded out the corn (Deut 25:4); they also drew a dray or sledge over the stalks.
 - 1. Corn needed to be bruised in order to separate the grain from the stalk and/or shell.
 - 2. Corn only needed to be bruised. It did not require extensive or perpetual crushing.
 - 3. The three methods of threshing here, severe bruising, are only done a short while.
- C. God does not bruise His people by severe chastening forever (Ps 103:8-9; Isaiah 57:16).

29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

- A. See the notes for the first verse of this section to keep the main lesson strongly in mind.
- B. Farmers different ways to treat different grains at different stages of the year is brilliant.
- C. In a creative, gentle way, the LORD by Isaiah explained the wisdom of His providence.
 - 1. The insertion of several farming techniques placed here is not an accident or bizarre.
 - 2. God's providential dealings with Israel and Judah ... and with you and me ... is wise.
 - 3. God is most wonderful in counsel and excellent in working ... in all things He does.
 - 4. He has never made a mistake in how He treats you ... you may rejoice in tribulations.
 - 5. He has never chastened you too hard ... for He will use lesser means to protect you.
 - 6. There will be an escape, so it can be short (I Cor 10:13). Job did not humble himself.
 - 7. He will do what you need to personally profit and become perfect (Heb 12:5-13).
- D. This wisdom has a warning as well; peace may end today for His chastening to start.
 - 1. You may prosper today, but His punishment may begin tomorrow (Psalm 50:21).
 - 2. To lengthen your tranquility, break off your sins like Nebuchadnezzar did not.