

Isaiah Chapter 28 Continued

Verses 28: 14-19. The prophet turns his attention to the people of Jerusalem, who have made a “covenant with death”, by foolishly thinking that a pro-Assyrian alliance will protect them when Samaria falls. In contrast to their covenant, God promises to “lay in Zion ... a precious corner stone”.

New Testament writers clearly identify that cornerstone as Jesus Christ (Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:6). Those who believe in Him find Him “a sure foundation”. To those who reject Him, He becomes a stumbling stone.

Isaiah 28:14 "Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem."

“Wherefore”: In light of the tragedies that had befallen Ephraim (verses 1-13), the scornful leaders in Jerusalem needed to steer a course different from relying on foreign powers for deliverance.

In the last lesson, we saw God angry with His people, because of their drunkenness. Even the priests and prophets had been involved in the sin. Now we see, they have scorned the truth. Now, Isaiah is reminding them to hear the Word of the LORD.

This is a terrible indictment on those who rule over Jerusalem. Their scorn is a rejection of God and His Word.

Isaiah 28:15 "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:"

“Covenant with death”: Scornful leaders in Jerusalem had made an agreement with Egypt to help defend themselves against the Assyrians.

“Overflowing scourge”: Combining images of an overflowing river and a whip, the people bragged about their invincibility to foreign invasion.

“Lies ... falsehood”: Jerusalem’s leaders yielded to expediency for the sake of security. Without directly admitting it, they had taken refuge in deceit and falsehood.

In this, we see people who believe they are safe from harm, and are not. In the case of the physical house of Israel, this would be people who thought themselves protected, because they were descendants of Abraham. In the case of the spiritual house of Israel, this would be those who have been baptized, but not saved.

They would believe they were safe, because of their baptism. Baptism does not save. Even John the Baptist said, repent and be baptized. The change of heart is what is really important. Romans 10:9-10 tells it so well.

They have believed a lie. A person is not saved because of whose child, or grandchild he is. He is not saved by the formality of baptism either. The person who is saved has a converted heart and then is baptized. He has become a new creature in Christ.

Isaiah 28:16 "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."

“Corner Stone, a sure foundation”: The Lord God contrasted the only sure refuge with the false refuge of relying on foreigners (verse 15). This directly prophesied the coming of the Messiah (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8; Isa. 8:14-15; Psalm 118:22).

“Haste”: The Hebrew word is “hurry.” The Greek Old Testament interprets this Hebrew verb for “hurry” in the sense of “put to shame,” furnishing the basis of the New Testament citations of this verse (Romans 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6).

Zion symbolizes the church. The stone and the chief cornerstone are Jesus. To base your salvation, or help, on any other is to fail. There is no other way to heaven, but in the name of Jesus. "Jesus" means Jehovah Savior. This is Jehovah GOD.

Jesus is the Cornerstone that we build upon. We are the lively stones that are held together by the Cornerstone. The foundation of all salvation is in Jesus. Notice the word "believeth".

Isaiah 28:17 "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."

“Judgment ... line”: When the Messiah rules His kingdom, the system of justice will contrast strongly with the refuge of lies in which Jerusalem’s leaders engaged (verse 15).

Judgment is just and balanced to all alike is the statement about the line. Justice is exact when Jesus is the Judge. It is exact. This is what the plumb does. We saw in a previous verse, that some thought they were saved, when they were not. They thought their doubts had been hidden.

The hail is probably in the physical, speaking of the Assyrian invasion which comes like a storm. In the spiritual, it could be similar to the parable of the ten virgins. The Lord came before they were ready.

There is no place to hide in the Assyrian invasion. There is even less place to hide from the Lord. He will come like a thief in the night, when you least expect it, and He will find you.

Isaiah 28:18 "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."

“Covenant with death ... shall not stand”: Trusting in foreign deliverers will utterly fail (see verse 15).

We find that all of their plans for safety are done away with. They will not be saved, because they are Abraham's descendants. The so-called Christians will not be saved, because they have carried out a custom. The pretenders, then or now will be destroyed.

Isaiah 28:19 "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."

“Morning by morning”: The Assyrians repeatedly plundered the area around Jerusalem, provoking great terror among the city’s inhabitants.

The Assyrian army will come in waves, until the whole land is defeated. The population will be greatly reduced by death. Many will be carried away captive. Vexation here, means fear, or agitation.

It seems there were several wars. The fear grew more and more with every invasion.

Verses 20-29: Man made covenants are humorously depicted by the illustration of a “bed” that is “shorter than that a man can stretch himself on” or by a “covering” that is “narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” This clever illustration emphasizes the frustration of attempting to sleep in such a manner, and it illustrates the futility of trusting in human alliances.

He then turns to an illustration of the “plowman” who does not plow just for the sake of plowing but that he might reap a crop. “Fitches” means “black cummin” a plant with black seeds used for seasoning.

Isaiah 28:20 "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]."

“Bed is shorter ... covering narrower”: A proverbial expression about shorts beds and narrow sheets, telling Jerusalem that foreign alliances are inadequate preparations for the defense of the city.

Isaiah 28:21 "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."

“Mount Perazim ... valley of Gibeon”: Just as the Lord defeated the Philistines at Mt. Perazim (2 Sam. 5:19-20; 1 Chron. 14:10-11), and the Canaanites in the Valley of Gibeon (Jos. 10:6-11), He will do so against any who mock Him, even Jerusalemites.

This Perazim is remembering a battle where David defeated the Philistines with divine intervention from God. These people belong to God, as David did, but they have grieved God. The strange part here is the fact that God is helping the enemy of His people.

This is actually a judgment on God's people. God is just using ungodly people to carry out His punishment for Him. God is in control of all, even Satan.

Isaiah 28:22 "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 consumption”: God had decreed something unusual (verse 21), the destruction of His own wicked people. Yet, they could escape if they repented.

Isaiah is telling them to be thankful their punishment is no worse than it is. If they start bragging about the light affliction, God will see that it is made more severe.

Isaiah 28:23 "Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech."

“Give ye ear”: The parable of a farmer underlined the lessons of judgment threats (in verses 18-22). As the farmer does his different tasks, each in the right season and proportion, so God adopts His measures to His purposes: now mercy, then judgment, punishing sooner, than later. His purpose was not to destroy His people, any more than the farmer's object in his threshing or plowing is to destroy his crop.

Isaiah is telling them not to turn a deaf ear to him, but listen. We will see in the midst of this, comfort to those who will listen.

Isaiah 28:24 "Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?"

“Plow all day... break the clods”: No ordinary farmer plows and turns the soil endlessly. He sows also in accord with what is proper.

To plant a crop, you must first plow the field. The field (church), must be prepared to receive the seed (Word of God). The plowing and breaking the clods seems cruel, but you cannot have a good harvest without first preparing the field.

Isaiah 28:25 "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?"

After preparing the soil, the farmer carefully plants the seed.

The word "appointed" lets us know that each thing was planted in its proper place. After the field is ready, the seed is put in to grow into wheat, and other things for making bread.

Fitches means fennel-flower. Cummin is a condiment. Wheat is not only food, but symbolizes the believers in Christ, as well. Barley and rye are less expensive grains than wheat.

Isaiah 28:26 "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, [and] doth teach him."

"God doth instruct ... him": Farming intelligently is a God given instinct.

The laws governing planting are found in the Leviticus study. One that comes to mind quickly is that you do not put different seed in the same place. Another is the land must rest the seventh year.

Verses 27-28: God given understanding prevails in the threshing of various types of grain.

Isaiah 28:27 "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."

The fitches were too tender to be sent through the threshing process. The grain was sometimes run over by a cartwheel to mash the grain out, but the cummin could not be handled in this manner.

Isaiah 28:28 "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."

We see the reasoning now, in the manner it is harvested. It would bruise, if handled differently. The main thing we can learn from this is the fact that God does not deal with all of us alike, any more than the grain is handled alike. Our needs are taken into consideration, when God deals with us.

Isaiah 28:29 "This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, [which] is wonderful in counsel, [and] excellent in working."

Wonderful in counsel: If God's way in the physical realm of farming is best, why did Jerusalem persist in refusing to accept His spiritual guidance?

God has a perfect plan. He makes no mistakes. The only correct way to do anything is His way. He has taken everything into consideration. We might overlook something. His wisdom is unsurpassed.

Isaiah Chapter 28 Continued Questions

1. What kind of men is verse 14 speaking to?
2. What is Isaiah telling them to do?
3. What is their scorn?
4. What is meant by making a covenant with death?
5. Why did the physical house of Israel think they were protected?
6. What very similar mistake do Christians make?
7. What do you become, when you are a Christian?
8. Zion symbolizes the _____.
9. The chief Cornerstone is _____.
10. "Jesus" means what?
11. What are the Christians, in relation to the Cornerstone?
12. Judgment is _____ and _____ in the statement about the line.
13. What does the plumb show us?
14. What is the hail, in verse 17, speaking of in the physical?
15. In the spiritual, what is it saying?
16. What will happen to them, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through?
17. What happens to the pretenders?
18. Who will come and destroy them?
19. The bed is shorter than a man can _____ _____ _____.
20. What is Perazim remembering?
21. What is this attack really?
22. If they start bragging about the light affliction, what will happen?
23. What does the field in verse 24 symbolize?
24. What does the seed symbolize?

25. What does the word "appointed" in verse 25 tell us?
26. What does the wheat symbolize?
27. Why can the fitches not be threshed?
28. What can we learn from the different manner of threshing?
29. The only correct way to do things, is _____ way.