

A Trek Through Isaiah 24 - 28:1-29

Bruce Pike

February 4, 2024

Isaiah 28 – 37 Looking forward

<u>The Lord of History (28:1 - 37:38)</u>					
1st Woe: The word of God and the purpose of God 28:1-29	2nd Woe: Is anything too hard for the LORD? 29:1-14	3rd Woe: Spiritual transformation 29:15-24	4th Woe: Faithlessness and faithfulness 30:1-33	5th Woe: All things new 31:1 - 32:20	6th Woe: Home at last 33:1 - 35:10
Historical Epilogue 36:1 - 37:38					

Overview

- These chapters form the greatest of Isaiah's interim fulfillments.
- He had prophesied one world, one people, one God. Now he answers the question: Is it real?
- The test case was the "Egyptian alliance" situation in the days of Hezekiah. Judah was under Assyria. Merodach-Baladan of Babylon was urging alliance against Assyria. Egypt was promising assistance for a revolt. Isaiah's job was to urge the way of faith, trusting in Yahweh rather than in politics.
- Hezekiah was fascinated with military/political solutions. But in the end, with the Assyrians at the gate of Jerusalem, he trusted in Yahweh, and the city was delivered.

Structure

- Two sections
 - 28 - 35 Six woes
 - 36 - 37 Epilogue

Woes in pairs: 1-4, 2-5, 3-6

Developing story line

- 28 - 29 (woes 1-3) Principles
- 30 - 32 (woes 4 & 5) Application to current events and the future
- 33 - 35 (woe 6) Final resolution in the far future
- 36 - 37 (epilogue) Interim fulfillment: Defeat of Assyria

The First Woe: The Word of God and the Purpose of God 28:1-29

Message regarding Samaria 28:1-6

The pride of Samaria 28:1

Isaiah 28:1 (LSB)

1Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, And to the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
Which is at the head of the fertile valley Of those who are overcome with wine!

- Woe.
 - Heb hoy: alas, woe.
 - Summons to the bar of judgment.
- the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim.
 - City is pictured as a wreath on the head of a drunken reveler.
- the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
 - Beautiful but wilting.
- the head of the fertile valley.
 - City of Samaria.
 - Capital of the northern kingdom
- Proud...fertile valley...overcome with wine.
 - Samaria's sins: pride, materialism, sensuality.

Coming destruction 28:2-4

Isaiah 28:2-4 (LSB)

2Behold, the Lord has a strong and courageous agent; As a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction, Like a storm of mighty overflowing waters, He has set it down to the earth with His hand.

3The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim is trodden under foot.

4And the fading flower of its glorious beauty, Which is at the head of the fertile valley, Will be like the first-ripe fig prior to summer, Which one sees, And as soon as it is in his hand, He swallows it.

- Two pictures of Samaria's destruction.
 - 1) Desert storm showing the power behind the destruction.
 - 2) eating the first fruit of the harvest showing the ease and suddenness of the destruction.
- V2 Agent of destruction
 - the Lord.
 - Sovereign over history.
 - Has a strong and courageous agent
 - Assyria. But not named to state a principle.
 - Storm
 - Two pictures from desert weather
 - Violent hailstorm.
 - Flash flood
 - He has set it down to the earth with His hand.
 - Yahweh uses nations to accomplish His purpose
- V3 Fall of Samaria
 - Trodden underfoot
 - by a conquering army
- V4 Ripe for swallowing
 - The first-ripe fig prior to summer, Which one sees, And as soon as it is in his hand, He swallows it.
 - First fruit after the long winter
 - Eager to eat.
 - Quick to disappear.

V5-6 Coming redemption

Isaiah 28:5–6 (LSB)

5 In that day Yahweh of hosts will become a beautiful crown And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people;

6 A spirit of just judgment for him who sits in judgment, A might to those who turn back the onslaught at the gate.

- Sudden change from judgment to hope
- V5 The true crown
 - a beautiful crown And a glorious diadem
 - The true garland
 - Contrast v1 the false crown of pride
 - the remnant of his people,
 - The believing remnant.
- V6 The true King
 - Him who sits in judgment
 - The Davidic monarchy restored.
 - Spirit of just judgment. True justice for the poor and oppressed. Rather than that of the present drunken rulers.
 - Might. To defend the city
 - Re Is 11: 1-4 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and might, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. And He will delight in the fear of Yahweh, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor render a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with uprightness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will put the wicked to death.

Message regarding Jerusalem 28:7-22

Drunken leaders 28:7-8

Isaiah 28:7–8 (LSB)

7And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink; They are swallowed up by wine, they stagger from strong drink; They reel while having visions; They totter when rendering a verdict.

8For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place.

- V7 Worthless religious leaders
 - These also
 - Scene shifts to Jerusalem.
 - reel with wine and stagger from strong drink;
 - Picture of drunken revelry. May be a banquet to celebrate the Egyptian alliance, or revelry connected with worship.
 - The priest and the prophet reel.
 - Religious offices: the priest represents the people to God; the prophet brings God's word to the people.
 - Swallowed up by wine
 - Under its control
 - They reel while having visions; They totter when rendering a verdict.
 - Drunken while performing their offices. All communication with God is cut off.
- V8 Complete debauchery
 - For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place.
 - Disgusting picture

Mocking leaders 28:9-22

The prophet mocked 28:9-10

Isaiah 28:9–10 (LSB)

9“Whom would He instruct in knowledge, And whom would He provide understanding about the report? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast?

10“For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there.’”

- V9 Whom would He instruct in knowledge...
 - The revelers speaking
 - No repentance
 - They mock the prophet as one who speaks as if to children.
- V10 Order on order
 - Either repetition as used with a child or unintelligible baby talk or “blah, blah, blah”.

The prophet answers 28:11-13

Isaiah 28:11–13 (LSB)

11 Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue,

12 He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” And, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen.

13 So the word of Yahweh to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,” That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive.

- V11 The judgment
 - Indeed
 - The prophet turns their words back on them
 - He will speak to this people
 - Yahweh will speak.
 - No longer My people.
 - Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue
 - they will hear meaningless words from their captors.
- V12 What Yahweh had said
 - Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” And, “Here is repose;
 - Yahweh entreating His people: real rest is in Me
 - The message that they would not hear.
- V13 What Yahweh will say
 - So the word of Yahweh to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,”
 - Same as v10
 - Gibberish since they would not hear
 - As Is 6:9 Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand...
- V13 The result
 - That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive
 - Here is the result
 - Pictures of one falling and of an animal trapped with no escape

The word of Yahweh 28:14-19

Isaiah 28:14–19 (LSB)

14Therefore, hear the word of Yahweh, O scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,

15Because you have said, “We have cut a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact.

The overflowing scourge will not reach us when it passes by, For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have hidden ourselves with lying.”

16Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

17“I will make justice the measuring line And righteousness the level; Then hail will sweep away the refuge of falsehood, And the waters will overflow the secret place.

18“Your covenant with death will be canceled, And your pact with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will become its trampling place.

19“As often as it passes through, it will take you; For morning after morning it will pass through, anytime during the day or night, And it will be sheer terror to understand the report.”

- V14 Call to hear

- Therefore, hear the word of Yahweh. Time for them to hear truth.
- O scoffers. The ones making fun of the prophet in v9-10.
- Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem. The Judean leaders.

- V15 Their false security

- Covenant...pact...the scourge will not reach us.
 - Picture of a treaty protecting them.
 - Refers to their web of alliances with surrounding nations.
- Refuge in lies and falsehood.
 - The prophet speaking sarcastically.
 - How God sees their political solution: deceiving themselves and their people

- V16 True security.
 - Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh. The true Sovereign speaks
 - Behold. Pay attention.
 - I am laying. Perfect tense. God's eternal plan.
 - In Zion. Not in Egypt.
 - a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed
 - Picture from building construction.
 - Cornerstone placed first, aligns the foundation for the entire building
 - Tested. Will not crumble. Unlike Colorado sandstone.
 - Costly. No expense spared.
 - Firmly placed. Will not move. No foundation problems for this building.
 - For Isaiah's contemporaries
 - Picture of a solid foundation
 - Not like political alliances
 - Prophecy of the coming Davidic King
 - Cornerstone. Of the church (Eph 2:20)
 - Tested. Heb 4:15 One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.
 - Costly. God's only Son
 - Firmly placed. Commissioned by Yahweh. Ps 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."
 - will not be disturbed.
 - Not fearful or acting rashly. Rather being at rest in Yahweh.
 - As promised in v12: Here is rest...here is repose.
- V17-19 Coming judgment
 - V17 Justice the measuring line and righteousness the level.
 - Continuing the picture from building construction. The standard for plumb and level
 - V17 hail will sweep away the refuge of falsehood,
 - Found not plumb and not level. Demolished.
 - V18a Their covenant will be canceled by the true Sovereign.
 - V18b-19
 - No refuge
 - Overcome again and again. Typical Assyrian tactics.
 - Sheer terror

Warning and appeal 28:20-22

Isaiah 28:20–22 (LSB)

20The bed is too short on which to stretch out, And the blanket is too narrow to wrap oneself in.

21For Yahweh will rise up as at Mount Perazim; He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon, To work His work, His unusual work, And to labor in His labor, His exceptional labor.

22So now do not carry on as scoffers, Lest your fetters be made stronger; For I have heard from Lord Yahweh of hosts Of complete destruction, one that is decreed, on all the earth.

- V20 Warning
 - Popular proverbs of inadequacy: (1) bed too short (2) blanket too narrow
 - Their own provisions are insufficient.
- V21 Yahweh will arise.
 - Mt Perazim. Where God brought David victory over the Philistines (2 Sam 5:20)
 - Valley of Gibeon. Joshua's victory over the Amorites (Josh 10:10-14). God made the sun stand still.
 - His unusual work...His exceptional labor.
 - Not what they expected.
 - Not for His people but against those who will not trust in Him.
 - For His people: captivity
 - For His city: destruction
- V22 Appeal to repent
 - So now do not carry on as scoffers. Repent from their present attitude
 - Lest your fetters be made stronger. What will happen if they don't repent.
 - For I have heard from Lord Yahweh of hosts. Truth of the prophet's message.
 - Of complete destruction, one that is decreed, on all the earth.
 - Coming consequences.
 - Only the remnant will survive.

The wise Lord 28:23-29

Isaiah 28:23–29 (LSB)

23 Give ear and hear my voice, Pay attention and hear my words.

24 Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed? Does he continually turn and harrow his ground?

25 Does he not level its surface And sow dill and scatter cumin And plant wheat in rows, Barley in its place and rye within its area?

26 For his God disciplines and teaches him proper judgment.

27 For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the wheel of a cart driven over cumin; But dill is beaten out with a staff, and cumin with a rod.

28 Grain for bread is crushed, But he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually disturb it, He does not crush it longer.

29 This also comes from Yahweh of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.

- Change in tone from severe to hopeful
- Two pictures from agriculture
- V23 call to hear
 - Typical of wisdom literature
- V24-28 illustration from agriculture
 - V24 -25 Plowing and sowing
 - Does the farmer plow continually...? Rhetorical question: No.
 - Rather he follows the right procedure to get a crop: prepare the ground (plow, harrow, level the surface) then sow (each crop in its place)
 - V26 How does he know to do this? God teaches him
 - V27-28 Threshing
 - Uses the right procedure. Treatment appropriate for each grain. Not too violent. Not forever.

- V29 Explanation of the illustration
 - This also comes from Yahweh of hosts
 - Confirming the validity of the prophecy in v14-22.
 - Reasoning from the lesser to the greater: Yahweh teaches the farmer wisdom; likewise, through the prophet, He is teaching the leaders wisdom:
 - V14 You scoffers who rule Jerusalem
 - V15 You have built your own refuge and think yourself secure
 - V16 I am laying in Zion a cornerstone, trust in it and you will be secure
 - V17-19 Hail will sweep away your refuge. The scourge will overflow you. It will be sheer terror
 - V21 Yahweh is about to do His unusual work: judgment on His own people
 - V22 Do not continue as scoffers.
 - Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great
 - Counsel wonderful.
 - As 9:6 ...Wonderful Counselor,
 - Beyond human ability. Divine.
 - Wisdom great.
 - Effective application of knowledge to achieve the desired end.
 - Exactly what is needed
 - Isaiah pleading with the leaders to listen, but they would not.

What are the principles here?

- Yahweh reached out to His people with a promise of rest and repose but they did not listen. V12 here is rest.
- Rather they relied on their own devices rather than on Him. V14-15 made their own covenant
- Now their leaders are worthless. V1, 7-8 drunken, v9-10 mocking
- So Yahweh will bring judgment on His people. There is no security in their self-reliance. V3-4 Samaria, v11, 13, 17-19, 21 Judah.
- He uses nations to accomplish His purpose. V2 a strong agent
- One day He will redeem a remnant. V5 Yahweh a beautiful crown to the remnant
- One day there will come a ruler faithful to Yahweh. In Him is true security. V6 justice and might, 16 a true cornerstone.
- Yahweh pleads with His people to return to Him. V20 the bed is too short, v22 do not carry on as scoffers
- Yahweh will do exactly what is needed to accomplish His purpose. V23-29 His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.

Application: Persevering on the rock

Look at Isaiah 28:16–19

- What was going to happen to Judah? V17-19 refuge swept away, secret place invaded, covenant canceled, trampled by the overflowing scourge. Again and again. Sheer terror.
- What about the remnant? Is there a refuge for them? V16 Yes, believe in the cornerstone and not be disturbed.

How does this work?

Look at Mt 7:24–27

- Also about a secure foundation: the house built on the rock stands.
- How does one build on the rock? Hear the words of Jesus and do them. This is Isaiah's believing in the cornerstone.
- Does that keep away the storms? No
- What happens when the storms come? The remnant persevere in the Lord and their house stands

Judah would experience the storm of the fall of Jerusalem and exile to Babylon. Daniel and others in the remnant did not escape that storm, but they kept believing in the cornerstone and 70 yr later their children returned to Jerusalem to rebuild.

Example of my family

- From Massachusetts
- Father known as a leader. Called "The Duke"
- Married my mother and moved to California, the land of opportunity
- No evidence of true faith: house built on sand.
- Storms hit: maybe few friends, different culture, no connections.
- House fell: two failed businesses, alcoholism. Father recovered but was a broken man.
- We did different: In Arabia I decided to trust in Christ, in Houston we came to a Bible-believing church, now at New Life. We have seen storms but our house is standing.

Is 28:16 says He who believes in it (the cornerstone) will not be disturbed. What does it mean to not be disturbed?

- Not delivered from storms.
- Kept by God through them.
- Having the peace that passes understanding. (Ph 4:7)
- Showing a true faith that will result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 1:7)

References

Scripture quotations are from The Legacy Standard Bible, Copyright © 2021 by the Lockman Foundation A Corporation Not For Profit, La Habra, California, all rights reserved.

Calvin, John, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah*, Baker Books, 2009

Henry, Matthew, *An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Blue Letter Bible, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_000.cfm

Motyer, Alec, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, Intersity Press, 1999

Oswalt, John, *The Book of Isaiah*, Eerdmans, 1986

Stevenson, Peter, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, BJU Press, 2003

Young, Edward, *The Book of Isaiah*, Eerdmans, 1972