

# A False Hope and the Sure Hope

Lesson 7: Isaiah 28-31

October 21, 2018

# Review

- 1-39 Book of Condemnation
  - 1-5 The Lord Speaks to Isaiah
  - 6 Isaiah is Called and Sent
  - 7-12 **The Coming Assyrian Invasion**
  - 13-27 **The Lord Speaks to the Nations**
  - 28-35 **The Lord Speaks to the Nation**
  - 36-39 **The Assyrian Invasion**
- 40-66 Book of Comfort
  - 40-48 Comfort in the Sovereign God (theology proper)
  - 49-59 Comfort in God the Deliverer (soteriology)
  - 60-66 Comfort in the Kingdom of God (eschatology)

# Chapter 28 Outline

- 1-6 Two crowns compared
- 7-13 Judah's priests and prophets
- 14-22 The Covenant with Death and the Cornerstone
- 23-29 A parable of the farmer: accept God's wisdom

## Two crowns compared Isaiah 28:1-3

<sup>1</sup>Woe 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!

<sup>2</sup>Behold, the Lord has a strong and mighty *agent*;

As a **storm** of hail, a tempest of destruction,

Like a **storm** of mighty overflowing waters,

He has cast *it* down to the earth with *His* hand.

<sup>3</sup>The **proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim** is trodden under foot.

- First woe
- Chiastic v. 1-4
  - Proud crown...fading flower...fertile valley
  - Storm
  - Proud crown...fading flower...fertile valley
- The Assyrians are God's storm of judgment

## Two crowns compared Isaiah 28:4-6

<sup>4</sup>And **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.  
<sup>5</sup>In **that day** the LORD of hosts will become a  
beautiful crown  
And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His  
people;  
<sup>6</sup>A spirit of justice for him who sits in  
judgment,  
A strength to those who repel the onslaught  
at the gate.

- The Lord of Hosts
  - Beautiful crown
  - Glorious diadem
  - A spirit of justice
  - A strength
- Salvation oracle after the woe

## Judah's priests and prophets

### Isaiah 28:7-9

<sup>7</sup>And these also **reel** with wine and stagger from strong drink:

The priest and the prophet **reel** with strong drink,

They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink;

They **reel** while having visions,

They totter *when rendering* judgment.

<sup>8</sup>For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a *single clean* place.

<sup>9</sup>“To whom would He teach knowledge, And to whom would He interpret the message?

Those *just* weaned from milk?

Those *just* taken from the breast?

- These also – Judah is no better
- The condemnation is for the leaders
- God's words were thought foolish

## Judah's priests and prophets Isaiah 28:10-13

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup>So the word of the LORD 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.

- This is what the people thought the word of the Lord was
- The people refuse to listen
- They reject the Lord's rest
- This comes back in judgment on the people

## The Covenant with Death and the Cornerstone Isaiah 28:14-16

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers,  
Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,  
<sup>15</sup>Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death,  
And with Sheol we have made a pact.  
The overwhelming scourge will not reach us  
when it passes by,  
For we have made falsehood our refuge and  
we have concealed ourselves with  
deception.”  
<sup>16</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,  
“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.

- A command to hear the word of the Lord
- Death – Assyria or Egypt
  - There is no protection in joining Satan either
- God had already promised protection in chapter 7
- Instead of lies, a cornerstone



## The Covenant with Death and the Cornerstone Isaiah 28:17-19

<sup>17</sup>"I will make justice the measuring line  
And righteousness the level;  
Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies  
And the waters will overflow the secret  
place.

<sup>18</sup>"Your covenant with death will be canceled,  
And your pact with Sheol will not stand;  
When the overwhelming scourge passes  
through,  
Then you become its trampling *place*.

<sup>19</sup>"As often as it passes through, it will seize  
you;  
For morning after morning it will pass  
through, *anytime* during the day or night,  
And it will be sheer terror to understand  
what it means."

- A new foundation needed to be established
- Their false hope will come to nothing
- There will be a great time of distress

## The Covenant with Death and the Cornerstone Isaiah 28:20-22

<sup>20</sup>The bed is too short on which to stretch  
out,  
And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself  
in.

<sup>21</sup>For the LORD will rise up as *at* Mount  
Perazim,  
He will be stirred up as in the valley of  
Gibeon,  
To do His task, His unusual task,  
And to work His work, His extraordinary  
work.

<sup>22</sup>And now do not carry on as scoffers,  
Or your fetters will be made stronger;  
For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts  
Of decisive destruction on all the earth.

- God will arise and work a great salvation
- Grace is unusual, extraordinary
- Woe needs to drive to repentance and salvation

## A parable of the farmer

Isaiah 28:23-26

<sup>23</sup>Give ear and hear my voice,  
Listen and hear my words.

<sup>24</sup>Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed?

Does he *continually* turn and harrow the ground?

<sup>25</sup>Does he not level its surface

And sow dill and scatter cummin

And plant wheat in rows,

Barley in its place and rye within its area?

<sup>26</sup>For his God instructs and teaches him properly.

- Illustration from planting
- Preparation happens until completion
- Both parables have the same point
- Explains God's "unusual task"
- God is doing what is appropriate
- God teaches the right way to act

## A parable of the farmer

### Isaiah 28:27-29

<sup>27</sup>For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge,  
Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin;  
But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.

<sup>28</sup>*Grain for bread* is crushed,  
Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever.

Because the wheel of *his* cart and his horses *eventually* damage it,  
He does not thresh it longer.

<sup>29</sup>This also comes from the LORD of hosts,  
*Who* has made *His* counsel wonderful and *His* wisdom great.

- Illustration from harvesting
- The appropriate instrument needs to be used for the job
- God's wisdom is wonderful

# Chapter 29 Outline

- 1-8 Jerusalem besieged, then saved
- 9-14 The blindness of the people
- 15-24 Third woe: God's reversal

## Jerusalem besieged, then saved Isaiah 29:1-4

<sup>1</sup>Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city *where* David  
*once* camped!

Add year to year, observe your feasts on  
schedule.

<sup>2</sup>I will bring distress to Ariel,  
And she will be a *city of* lamenting and  
mourning;

And she will be like an Ariel to me.

<sup>3</sup>I will camp against you encircling *you*,  
And I will set siegeworks against you,  
And I will raise up battle towers against

<sup>4</sup>Then you will be brought low;  
From the earth you will speak,  
And from the dust *where* you are prostrate  
Your words *will* come.

Your voice will also be like that of a spirit  
from the ground,  
And your speech will whisper from the dust.  
you.

- Second woe
- God's altar wouldn't prevent distress coming to the wicked
- Description of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem

Jerusalem besieged,  
then saved  
Isaiah 29:5-7

<sup>5</sup>But the **multitude** of your enemies will become like fine dust,  
And the **multitude** of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away;  
And it will happen instantly, suddenly.  
<sup>6</sup>From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise,  
*With* whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.  
<sup>7</sup>And the **multitude** of all the nations who wage war against Ariel,  
Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her,  
Will be like a dream, a vision of the night.

- The enemies will suddenly disappear
- The Lord will do this
- The previous distress will seem like a dream

## The blindness of the people Isaiah 29:8-10

<sup>8</sup>It will be as when a hungry man dreams—  
And behold, he is eating;  
But when he awakens, his hunger is not  
satisfied,  
Or as when a thirsty man dreams—  
And behold, he is drinking,  
But when he awakens, behold, he is faint  
And his thirst is not quenched.  
Thus the **multitude** of all the nations will be  
Who wage war against Mount Zion.  
<sup>9</sup>Be delayed and wait,  
Blind yourselves and be blind;  
They become drunk, but not with wine,  
They stagger, but not with strong drink.  
<sup>10</sup>For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of  
deep sleep,  
He has shut your eyes, the prophets;  
And He has covered your heads, the seers.

- Verse 9 addresses Judah again
- Similar to Isaiah 6:10



## The blindness of the people Isaiah 29:11-13

<sup>11</sup>The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed." <sup>12</sup>Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this." And he will say, "I cannot read."

<sup>13</sup>Then the Lord said,  
"Because this people draw near with their words  
And honor Me with their lip service,  
But they remove their hearts far from Me,  
And their reverence for Me consists of  
tradition learned *by rote*,

- Similar to 28:13
- God is not concerned merely with words, but with the heart

## God's reversal Isaiah 29:14-16

<sup>14</sup>Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous;  
And the wisdom of their wise men will perish,  
And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."

<sup>15</sup>Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD,  
And whose deeds are *done* in a dark place,  
And they say, "Who sees us?" or "Who knows us?"

<sup>16</sup>You turn *things* around!  
Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay,  
That what is made would say to its maker, "He did not make me";  
Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

- God's wonders are beyond human wisdom
- Looks ahead to Christ
- Third woe (v. 15)
- Further evidence of pride

## God's reversal Isaiah 29:17-20

<sup>17</sup>Is it not yet just a little while  
Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile  
field,  
And the fertile field will be considered as a  
forest?  
<sup>18</sup>On **that day** the deaf will hear words of a  
book,  
And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes  
of the blind will see.  
<sup>19</sup>The **afflicted** also will increase their  
**gladness** in the LORD,  
And the **needy** of mankind will **rejoice** in the  
Holy One of Israel.  
<sup>20</sup>For the ruthless will come to an end and  
the scorner will be finished,  
Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be  
cut off;

- God will perform His own reversal
- Isaiah 9:2
- Joy is in the Holy One of Israel
- The wicked will be cut off

## God's reversal Isaiah 29:21-24

<sup>21</sup>Who cause a person to be indicted by a word,  
And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate,  
And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.

<sup>22</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

“Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now turn pale;

<sup>23</sup>But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst,  
They will sanctify My name;  
Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob

And will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>“Those who err in mind will know the truth,  
And those who criticize will accept instruction.

- God's promise to Abraham will not fail
- God's hands will do the work
- God's name is to be sanctified for what He does

# Chapter 30 Outline

- 1-7 Woe to those trusting in Egypt
- 8-17 God's word rejected
- 18-26 God's grace to Zion
- 27-33 Assyria punished

## Woe to those trusting in Egypt Isaiah 30:1-5

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the rebellious children,” declares  
the LORD,

“Who execute a plan, but not Mine,  
And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit,  
In order to add sin to sin;

<sup>2</sup>Who proceed down to Egypt  
Without consulting Me,

To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh  
And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

<sup>3</sup>“Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be  
your shame

And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your  
humiliation.

<sup>4</sup>“For their princes are at Zoan

And their ambassadors arrive at Hanes.

<sup>5</sup>“Everyone will be ashamed because of a  
people who cannot profit them,  
*Who* are not for help or profit, but for shame  
and also for reproach.”

- Fourth woe
- The people were not seeking God
- The treason of foreign aid
- Trusting in Egypt will bring shame

## God's word rejected Isaiah 30:6-8

<sup>6</sup>The oracle concerning the beasts of the Negev.

Through a land of distress and anguish,  
From where *come* lioness and lion, viper and flying serpent,

They carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys

And their treasures on camels' humps,  
To a people who cannot profit *them*;

<sup>7</sup>Even Egypt, whose help is vain and empty.

Therefore, I have called her

"Rahab who has been exterminated."

<sup>8</sup>Now go, write it on a tablet before them

And inscribe it on a scroll,

That it may serve in the time to come

As a witness forever.

- Treasures to buy Egypt's help
- Rahab is figurative of Egypt

## God's word rejected Isaiah 30:9-11

<sup>9</sup>For this is a rebellious people, false sons,  
Sons who refuse to listen

To the instruction of the LORD;

<sup>10</sup>Who say to the seers, "You must not see  
*visions*";

And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy  
to us what is right,  
Speak to us pleasant words,  
Prophesy illusions.

<sup>11</sup>"Get out of the way, turn aside from the  
path,  
Let us hear no more about the Holy One of  
Israel."

- Israel had been rebellious since the exodus
- They didn't want to hear what God had to say
- This is also the characteristic of this age



## God's word rejected Isaiah 30:12-14

<sup>12</sup>Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel,  
"Since you have rejected this word  
And have put your trust in oppression and  
guile, and have relied on them,

<sup>13</sup>Therefore this iniquity will be to you  
Like a breach about to fall,  
A bulge in a high wall,  
Whose collapse comes suddenly in an  
instant,

<sup>14</sup>Whose collapse is like the smashing of a  
potter's jar,  
So ruthlessly shattered  
That a sherd will not be found among its  
pieces  
To take fire from a hearth  
Or to scoop water from a cistern."

- Rejecting God's work brings punishment
- The consequences of iniquity
  - Sudden collapse
  - Complete destruction

## God's word rejected Isaiah 30:15-17

<sup>15</sup>For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said,  
"In repentance and rest you will be saved,  
In quietness and trust is your strength."  
But you were not willing,

<sup>16</sup>And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses,"

**Therefore** you shall flee!

"And we will ride on swift *horses*,"

**Therefore** those who pursue you shall be swift.

<sup>17</sup>One thousand *will flee* at the threat of one *man*;

You will flee at the threat of five,  
Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top  
And as a signal on a hill.

- Salvation is not by works
- The people wanted to work their own salvation
- Effects of Assyrian invasion

## God's grace to Zion Isaiah 30:18-21

<sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,

And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you.

For the LORD is a God of justice;

How blessed are all those who long for Him.

<sup>19</sup>O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.

<sup>20</sup>Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, *He*, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. <sup>21</sup>Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

- God waits to be gracious
- We need to wait on God
- When they cry God will answer
- God sometimes does hide Himself

## God's grace to Zion Isaiah 30:22-25

<sup>22</sup>And you will defile your graven images overlaid with silver, and your molten images plated with gold. You will scatter them as an impure thing, *and* say to them, "Be gone!"

<sup>23</sup>Then He will give *you* rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread *from* the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on **that day** your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture. <sup>24</sup>Also the oxen and the donkeys which work the ground will eat salted fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. <sup>25</sup>On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

- They will turn from their idols
- There will be abundant blessing
  - The ground
  - The livestock
  - Water
  - The sun and moon

## Assyria punished Isaiah 30:26-28

<sup>26</sup>The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times *brighter*, like the light of seven days, on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted.

<sup>27</sup>Behold, the name of the LORD comes from a remote place;

Burning is His anger and dense is *His* smoke;  
His lips are filled with indignation  
And His tongue is like a consuming fire;

<sup>28</sup>His breath is like an overflowing torrent,  
Which reaches to the neck,  
To shake the nations back and forth in a sieve,  
And to *put* in the jaws of the peoples the  
bridle which leads to ruin.

- The Lord will heal what He inflicted on His people
- Neck was also mentioned in 8:8

## Assyria punished Isaiah 30:29-31

<sup>29</sup>You will have songs as in the night when you keep the festival,  
And gladness of heart as when one marches to *the sound of* the flute,  
To go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.

<sup>30</sup>And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard,  
And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger,  
And *in* the flame of a consuming fire  
In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones.

<sup>31</sup>For at the voice of the LORD Assyria will be terrified,  
*When* He strikes with the rod.

- God's people will rejoice
- Assyria was God's rod, but Assyria will be struck as well

## Assyria punished Isaiah 30:32-33

<sup>32</sup>And every blow of the rod of punishment,  
Which the LORD will lay on him,  
Will be with *the music of* tambourines and  
lyres;  
And in battles, brandishing weapons, He will  
fight them.

<sup>33</sup>For Topheth has long been ready,  
Indeed, it has been prepared for the king.  
He has made it deep and large,  
A pyre of fire with plenty of wood;  
The breath of the LORD, like a torrent of  
brimstone, sets it afire.

- God will fight the Assyrians
- We can rejoice when God fights for His people
- Where were the 185,000 buried?

# Chapter 31 Outline

- 1-3 Woe to those relying on Egypt
- 4-5 God will deliver Jerusalem
- 6-7 Return to God from idols
- 8-9 Assyria will fall



## Woe to those relying on Egypt Isaiah 31:1-3

<sup>1</sup>Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help

*And* rely on horses,  
And trust in chariots because they are many  
And in horsemen because they are very strong,  
But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!

<sup>2</sup>Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster  
And does not retract His words,  
But will arise against the house of evildoers  
And against the help of the workers of iniquity.

<sup>3</sup>Now the Egyptians are men and not God,  
And their horses are flesh and not spirit;  
So the LORD will stretch out His hand,  
And he who helps will stumble  
And he who is helped will fall,  
And all of them will come to an end together.

- Fifth woe
- We should never do anything without relying on God
- They were relying on human wisdom

God will deliver  
Jerusalem  
Isaiah 31:4-5

<sup>4</sup>For thus says the LORD to me,

“As the lion or the young lion growls over his prey,  
Against which a band of shepherds is called out,  
*And* he will not be terrified at their voice nor disturbed at their noise,  
So will the LORD of hosts come down to wage war on Mount Zion and on its hill.”

<sup>5</sup>Like flying birds so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem.

He will protect and deliver *it*;  
He will pass over and rescue *it*.

- God will not be terrified by man
- He will protect Jerusalem and deliver it from the Assyrians
- The deliverance will be like the first passover

Return to God from idols  
Assyria will fall  
Isaiah 31:6-9

<sup>6</sup>Return to Him from whom you have deeply defected, O sons of Israel. <sup>7</sup>For in **that day** every man will cast away his silver idols and his gold idols, which your sinful hands have made for you as a sin.

<sup>8</sup>And the Assyrian will fall by a sword not of man,  
And a sword not of man will devour him.  
So he will not escape the sword,  
And his young men will become forced laborers.

<sup>9</sup>“His rock will pass away because of panic,  
And his princes will be terrified at the standard,”  
Declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

- “Return” is the call of the prophets and the Gospel
- The angel of the Lord killed the Assyrians
- God identifies Himself with Zion

# Summary

- Those who believe in the cornerstone will not be disturbed
- God's work is strange and extraordinary
- God counsel is wonderful and His wisdom is great
- God wants us to draw near with our hearts
- In repentance and rest is salvation
- Return to Him from whom you have deeply defected