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

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!
2Behold, 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.
3The 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

4 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.
5 In that day the LORD of hosts will become a beautiful crown
And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people;
6 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

7 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.
8 For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place.
9 “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

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

14Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers,
Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,
15Because 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.”
16Therefore 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

17“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.
18“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.
19“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

20The bed is too short on which to stretch out,
And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in.
21For 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.
22And 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

23 Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my words.
24 Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed?
Does he continually turn and harrow the ground?
25 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?
26 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

27 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.
28 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.
29 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

1 Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped!
Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.
2 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.
3 I will camp against you encircling you,
And I will set siegeworks against you,
And I will raise up battle towers against
4 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 alter wouldn’t prevent distress coming to the wicked
• Description of Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem
Jerusalem besieged, then saved
Isaiah 29:5-7

5 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.
6 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.
7 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

8It 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.
9Be delayed and wait,
Blind yourselves and be blind;
They become drunk, but not with wine,
They stagger, but not with strong drink.
10For 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

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

11 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.” 12 Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, “Please read this.” And he will say, “I cannot read.” 13 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,
God’s reversal
Isaiah 29:14-16

14 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.”
15 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?”
16 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

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?

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.

The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the Lord,
And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorners 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

21 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.
22 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;
23 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.
24 “Those who err in mind will know the truth,
And those who criticize will accept instruction.
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

1“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;
2Who proceed down to Egypt
   Without consulting Me,
   To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh
   And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!
3“Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame
   And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation.
4“For their princes are at Zoan
   And their ambassadors arrive at Hanes.
5“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.”
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;
Even Egypt, whose help is vain and empty.
Therefore, I have called her “Rahab who has been exterminated.”
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.
God’s word rejected
Isaiah 30:9-11

9 For this is a rebellious people, false sons,
Sons who refuse to listen
To the instruction of the LORD;
10 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.
11 “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

12 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,
13 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,
14 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

15 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,
16 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.
17 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

18 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.
19 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.
20 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.
21 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

22 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!”

23 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. 24 Also the oxen and the donkeys which work the ground will eat salted fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. 25 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

26 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.

27 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;
28 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

29You 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.
30And 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.
31For 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

32 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.

33 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

1 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!
2 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.
3 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

4 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.”

5 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

6Return to Him from whom you have deeply defected, O sons of Israel. 7For 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.

8And 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.

9“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