

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 25

Chapters 28-35 of Isaiah: The six “woe” passages and their message

Overview

The big picture of Chapters 28-35:

Judah's rebellion against the Lord in favor of trusting foreign nations
cannot cancel the **promises of God** for the remnant of Israel.

The Lord is saying to His people:

“I will fulfill the promises I made to Abraham and David. I will redeem My people Israel. I will destroy all of their enemies (and Mine) and bring them into the place where I will bless them forever.

But I can do it the easy way or the hard way.

The easy way is for you to trust in Me by hearing, believing, and obeying My Word.

The hard way is for you to rebel against Me by scoffing at My word and trusting in other nations.

The hard way means that you will pass through a heavy judgment before I can bless you. But I will bless you forever.”

“You keep choosing the hard way!

Having established God’s sovereignty over the nations, both individually (chapters 13-23) and generally (chapters 24-27), Isaiah now returns to Israel and Judah in his own day.

Their circumstances demonstrate the foolishness of relying on the nations instead of trusting the Lord.

And refusing to trust the Lord has devastating consequences.

Hence, Isaiah begins several sections with the funereal word “woe””

Isaiah 28:1	To Ephraim
Isaiah 29:1	To Judah
Isaiah 29:15	To Judah
Isaiah 30:1	To Judah
Isaiah 31:1	To Judah
Isaiah 33:1	To Assyria

The historical setting

Having established God's sovereignty over the nations, individually in chapters 13-23, and generally in chapters 24-27, Isaiah now returns to Israel and Judah in his own day.

The reference to Israel, Egypt and Assyria in Isaiah 27:12-13 forms the bridge to this new section.

Chapters 28-33 address a period in history in which these three powers warred with one another.

The sticking point was the alliance between Judah and Egypt during the rule of Hezekiah in Judah.

This historical period occurred sometime after the events of chapters 7 & 8 during the reign of Ahaz, but before the events of chapters 36 & 37.

In other words, between 730 BC and 705 BC.

Assyria was the evil empire. Hezekiah was a puppet king under Assyria. The ambitious king of Babylon (Merodach-Baladan) was seeking an alliance with the western Palestine states.

Egypt was poised to join the rebellion in defiance of Assyria.



Chapter summaries

Chapters 28 and 29 explain the principles of the Lord's sovereign outworking in human history.

Chapters 30-32 grapple with the historical events themselves. At the same time, the more Isaiah occupies himself in the historical events, the more he uses them as a springboard to end times events. For example, he places the fall of Assyria side by side with the arrival of the messianic kingdom.

Chapters 33-35 are entirely eschatological (like chapters 24-27): the coming of the King (chapter 33); the victory over all the forces of evil (chapter 34); and the glories of the messianic kingdom (chapter 35).

Section by section:

Chapter 28: 1-13 address Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom). Isaiah decries the evil rulers and predicts the complete destruction that is about to come. But note verses 5 and 6.: "in that day" which gives hope for their distant future.

Chapter 28:14 through 29:24 teach the principles behind the Lord's dealings with Judah and Jerusalem. The evil decisions of their rulers result in a destruction that is nearly complete. There is a veiled reference to their pact with Egypt. Yet the last section of chapter 29, verses 17-24, look forward to millennial blessing.

Chapters 30 and 31 specify the names of Egypt and Assyria. Both chapters begin with judgment and end with blessing.

Chapter 30:1-17 describes the punishment of Judah for her alliance with Egypt.

Chapter 30:18-33 describe the destruction of the Assyrian armies and the glories of the Millennium.

Chapter 31 repeats the pattern of chapter 30. Verses 1-3 predict the destruction of Egypt and the pro-Egypt faction in Judah. Verses 4-9 foretell the destruction of the Assyrian army and the deliverance of the remnant of Judah.

Chapter 32 emphasizes the Messiah and His kingdom but also address the coming poverty and destruction at the hands of the invading armies of Sennacherib (Assyria).

Chapter 33 predicts the destruction of Assyria.

Chapter 34 prophesies the final battle of Armageddon and its judgments.

Chapter 35 envisions the redeemed of the Lord as they travel to Zion, rejoicing to see the glories of the Millennial Kingdom.

Let's read chapter 31 together.

Please read chapters 28-35 between now and next Thursday. You can use the chapter summaries above as a guide.