

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 26

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.

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.

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.

Chapters 28 & 29

Chapter 28

Verses 1-13 pronounce woe on Ephraim (Israel) and her capital city, Samaria. Let's read **Isa 28:1-13**.

Isaiah had denounced Ephraim and Samaria earlier, in **chapter 9:8-21**.

Verses 1-6 talk about **two crowns**.

Verses 1-4: The first crown is the **city of Samaria**, which was the crown of Ephraim. It stood atop a hill overlooking a fertile valley.

In Isaiah's day, it was the capital city of the Northern Kingdom.

It had been a showcase of beauty.

But now her beauty was fading away.

The city's leaders were arrogant drunkards who had ruined her.



So the Lord is about to unleash His agent Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

His agent will be as powerful as a hurricane raining down hail and bringing raging floodwaters.

The city will be swallowed up as quickly and completely as a rip fig in the hands of a man.

Verses 5-6: In the middle of describing this appalling scene, Isaiah receives a vision of **the second crown**. This crown will never be tarnished. He describes **the Messiah in Zion** at His second coming. The Lord of Hosts will be the beautiful crown in that day.

Verses 7-8: The leaders were the priests and prophets. They were continually intoxicated from wine and strong drink. They were not even able to stand up, and vomited all over the place. They were in no condition to do their jobs. They didn't proclaim the word of God, and they didn't make just rulings.

Verses 9-13 continue the denunciation of the Northern Kingdom.

Isaiah plays back the scornful things that the leaders of Israel have said about Isaiah and his teaching.

He teaches them as one would a child. In their drunkenness, they were behaving like children. But they ridiculed him for this, and rejected the pure milk of the word of God that he had been feeding them in tiny portions ("order on order, line on line")

So the Lord will speak to them instead through the babbling of foreign nations with their unintelligible languages. These nations will conquer Israel and take her into captivity.

Verses 14-29 Having finished with the drunken leaders in Samaria, it's now time for Isaiah to warn the rulers in Jerusalem. Let's read **Isa 28:14-29**.

The rulers of Judah won't listen to Isaiah either. Really, they are rejecting the Lord and His word.

The Lord predicted that this would happen when He commissioned Isaiah in **Isa 6:9-13**.

Several times in this section, Isaiah commands the leaders in Jerusalem to **hear the word of the LORD**:

Here in **verse 14**, and also in **verses 16, 22, 23, and 26**.

Verses 14-15: But these leaders scoff at him. In fact, they boast that the Lord's hand is too small to destroy them.

They knowingly signed a contract with death and Sheol. They actually thought that they could cheat death. That they can lie their way out of punishment. So they can rest easy. They actually believe that the Lord and His agent will be fooled by their lies and deception.

See also **Isa 29:15 and 30:9-11**.

However, the same storm that is about to destroy Ephraim will not spare Judah either. Verse 17 b.

Please read chapters 28-35 between now and next Thursday. You can use the chapter summaries on pages 4-5 above as a guide.