

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 28

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

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

Chapter summaries

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 the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom.

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 **Kingdom.**

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 Messianic Kingdom.**

Chapters 28 & 29

Chapter 28

Verses 1-13 pronounce woe on **Ephraim** (Israel) and her capital city, **Samaria**.

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

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

The rulers of Judah won't listen to Isaiah either. They are really rejecting the Lord and His word.

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

Several times, 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 Isaiah. 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, and lie their way out of punishment. As if the Lord would 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.

Verses 16-19: Once again, Isaiah pauses in the middle of his diatribe to speak on behalf of the Lord. The LORD God is laying in Zion a tested and costly cornerstone, which represents the LORD's salvation through the Messiah's rule in Zion. He is the only true sanctuary.

See also **Deut 32:1-4 and Psa 118:19-23 and Isa 30:29-30**

The New Testament identifies the cornerstone as the Lord Jesus Christ. **Acts 4:10-12.**

The LORD will restore justice and righteousness as the standard against which every word and deed will be measured.

Thus, the scoffers and their schemes will not stand.

Verses 19c-22: We get the prophet's reflection on the Lord's words and works in verses 14-19b.

Their security arrangements with Egypt will be inadequate to protect them from the Assyrian onslaught.

They've made their bed, but they will get no rest.

The Lord is about to rise up and perform his strange work.

In Israel's past, the Lord rose up to defeat **Israel's enemies**.

In David's day, the Lord wiped out the Philistines like a flood at Mount Perazim. (2Sa 5:20).

In Joshua's day, the Lord destroyed the Amorites at Gibeon with large stones from heaven. (Jos 10:11)

But soon the Lord will act in an unusual, extraordinary way. He will rise up to destroy **His own people** using foreign armies - Israel's enemies.

There will be a complete destruction of the lands of Israel and Judah. Only the remnant of Jerusalem will be spared.

Verses 23-29 are a parable about farmers, who plow, plant, and thresh in the proper seasons according to the methods that God has established for them.

Each crop receives its own prepared soil. The threshing methods differ for each kind of crop.

This is a metaphor for the Lord's dealings with Israel, Judah, and the remnant in Jerusalem. These are His three kinds of crop. He plowed and planted, and patiently waited for the fruit and the wheat. But the land has produced mostly weeds and very little wheat or fruit.

The time has come for Him to thresh (judge and discipline) His people. He will separate the wheat from the chaff. But He will not wipe them out completely. The remnant of wheat will be preserved.

The Lord will do precisely what is required to produce the crop He desires.

Judgment is not final. After that comes the fruitful harvest of the Lord's blessings for His people.

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 continues the sequence of judgment followed by hope. The chapter consists of two such sequences:

Present judgment		Future blessing	
Verses 1-4		Verses 5-8	
Verses 9-16		Verses 17-24	

The chapter begins with the second woe, this time directed not at Ephraim but at **Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah**. Let's read **Isa 29:1-8**.

Verses 1-4 pronounce the **judgment** on Jerusalem.

Ariel is another name for Jerusalem, the city of David. Ariel in Hebrew has two meanings: "the lion of God" and "altar-hearth", the place of burning fire. Isaiah uses it in the second sense in verse 2.

The fire on the altar in the temple was always burning. Let's read **Lev 6:12-13**. The fire consumed the burnt offering and purified the sinner.

In the book of Isaiah, fire represents both destruction and salvation.

In **Isa 30:27-33**, Fire depicts the Lord's judgment and destruction of Assyria

In **Isa 4:4-5**, fire represents both judgment and redemption for Jerusalem.

Back in Isa 29:2-3, notice the word “I”. The LORD is doing his strange work. The hand of the Lord directs the activities of Sennacherib’s army during the siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC.

Verses 5-8: the prophet abruptly switches to the **vindication and deliverance** of Jerusalem (Ariel).

In *verses 5-6*, the Lord will shortly destroy the besieging armies in single night. (see **Isa 37:36**).

In *verses 7-8*, the destruction of the armies of Assyria and her allies is but a foretaste of the battle of Armageddon in the day of the Lord. See **Zech 12:6-9**.

Verses 9-14: describes the self-imposed **famine for the word of God** in Judah.

After pronouncing woe on Assyria, Isaiah returns to Judah and her blindness.

They chose to blind themselves to the Lord’s word. See the falsehood and deception in **Isa 28:15** .

So now the Lord will do the blinding. He will shut the eyes of the prophets, and put a hood over the seers. He will seal up His word to all of them, whether they can read or not.

See **Amos 5:11-12** for more on the famine of the word of God.

The “entire vision” in verse 11 refers to Isaiah’s prophecy about what the LORD is about to do both to Judah and to Assyria.

The sealed book is the same thing as the tablet in chapter 8 and chapter 30. See **Isa 30:8-11**.

He will deal with them marvelously. See the Lord's unusual task and extraordinary work in **Isa 28:21**. Later on, Habakkuk will describe the invasion of the Babylonian army in similar fashion. See **Hab 1:5-6**.

Jesus quotes verse 13 when He condemns the leaders of Jerusalem in His day: the Pharisees and scribes. See **Matt 15:1-9**.

In verse 14, the wise men are the leaders of the pro-Egypt faction who thought they were wiser than God and the Lord's prophet.

Verses 15-16: The third woe.

They thought that the Lord was blind to their schemes and deceptions. But they were the ones who were blind and self-deceived. See **Psalms 94:7-11**.

They had lost their senses. Isaiah uses the image of **the potter and the clay** to great effect, here and elsewhere in His prophecies. See **Isa 45:9; 64:8**. Paul also uses this image to describe the patience, mercy, and sovereignty of the Lord. **Rom 9:19-21**.

We will pick things up next week with **verses 17-24**: the blessings in the Messianic Kingdom.

Please read chapters 30-35 between now and next Thursday. You can use the chapter summaries on pages 1-2 above as a guide.