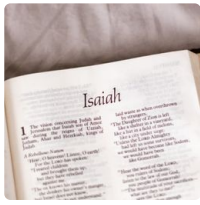


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Isaiah 28 - 29



Isaiah - Steve Gregg

Isaiah 28-29 is a prophetic message about the fall of the old city and establishment of the Messianic order. Through this chapter, Steve Gregg provides a detailed analysis of the text's historical background and its Messianic interpretation. The chapter also discusses the importance of trusting in God and resting in Him, rather than turning to earthly powers for help.

Transcript

Let's turn to Isaiah chapter 28. This section was given the very nondescript title when I was breaking Isaiah up into segments for you and giving them labels. We call this the woes.

I say nondescript because the woes doesn't really tell you very much about the specifics of the contents at all. But I call it that because of these six chapters, chapter 28 through 33, five of them begin with the word woe. And there's a sixth woe that falls in the middle of one of them.

In chapter 29, verse 15, there's a woe. Maybe that should have been a chapter division. But woe, woe, woe, woe, woe is how these chapters typically begin.

And woe, of course, is a cry of usually a cry of pity of sorts or dread about some horrible calamity that is coming on someone. Jesus used the term woe as the opposite of a beatitude. In Luke 6, he said, blessed are the poor.

But they said, woe unto the rich. And he said, blessed are you who are hungry, but woe unto you who are full. So he had actually in Luke chapter 6, he had four beatitudes followed by four woes that were the mere images of them.

So that woe would be kind of the opposite of blessed. Blessed are means you're enviable. Woe means you're definitely unenviable.

You're in circumstances that no one would wish for. And the subject matter of these woes is not all exactly the same. Sometimes it's talking about Israel, the northern

kingdom, but mostly it's talking about Judah.

In fact, in chapter 28, it would appear the first six verses are about the northern kingdom and were probably composed prior to the fall of Samaria. We don't have any dates given, but it would appear that this is talking about the destruction of the northern kingdom. But it certainly is not the main subject of these chapters, because it would appear that at verse 7 of chapter 28, he uses the previous prophecies to say, and the same thing goes for Judah.

In verse 7, in our New King James, it says, but they also have erred. But in the Young's literal translation, it's not they also have erred, but these also have erred. It's another group, and it's apparently Judah, because he mentions in verse 14, therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men who rule this people who are in Jerusalem.

It's very clear the first six verses are about Ephraim, that's the northern kingdom. So he pronounces a woe upon them, but then at verse 7, it says, but these also, apparently transitioning to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, the same thing applies to them. So it would appear that though Israel comes up for negative comment, it's not the main subject, and most of the chapters that follow are going to be about the woe upon Jerusalem.

And we'll find in these chapters, not a few cases of what we've seen in the previous few chapters, where there is reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the institution of the Messianic era. Now, of course, Jerusalem was destroyed twice in history, once by the Babylonians in Jeremiah's time, in 586 BC. But then it was later destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans, and it was this latter destruction of Jerusalem that was the permanent destruction.

Obviously, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, that was only for 70 years, it was eventually rebuilt. When the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, it has never been rebuilt, and some 2,000 years have passed since then, and it's still as unrebuilt as it ever was. It looks pretty permanent, and the Bible suggests that it is.

But it is that second destruction of Jerusalem that, of course, overlapped with the inauguration of the age of the Messiah. So when we read passages that seem to link the two together, the fall of the Old City and the establishment of the Messianic order, that fall of the Old City is probably a reference to AD 70, while, of course, the description could apply to 586 BC when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. More likely, because it is linked in the manner that it is with the Messianic age, it's probably the final destruction of the Old Order in AD 70 that is in view.

That is my assumption, and Jesus, of course, encourages that view. When he, in Luke 21, said to his disciples, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, which, of course, would have been in AD 70, he said, know that its desolation is near, and he goes on to

say, these are the days of vengeance that all things that are written might be fulfilled. So the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Jesus said, signaled the days of vengeance when the fulfillment of the prophetic oracles, all things that were written, would be fulfilled.

And no doubt these passages in Isaiah, which we might, on other grounds, have understood to be about AD 70, would seem to be confirmed by Christ's statement that they, in fact, are about AD 70. So we've got this recurring back and forth, again, out with the Old Order, in with the New. In many cases, though, of course, it begins with a criticism of the people of Judah or Israel in Isaiah's own day.

After all, the prophet did speak to his own generation, and he did express God's complaint to that generation. But in doing so, and even in talking about near-term judgment, he would often then lapse into the discussion about the destruction of Jerusalem altogether and the New Order. So just as we've seen that passages about deliverance, even passages about near-term deliverance in the prophets, sometimes morph into a passage about the ultimate salvation in Christ in the Kingdom Age, so also passages about near-term judgment sometimes morph into a description of the ultimate judgment that is the beginning of the Messianic Age, but the judgment came on the Old Order.

In chapter 28, verse 1, And woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine. Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Assyria, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with his hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot, and the glorious beauty is a fading flower, which is at the head of the verdant valley, like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees, he eats it up while it is still in his hand.

In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, for a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of his people, for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. Now, apparently in Ephraim, or in Israel, there will even be a remnant who survive. No doubt they would be, once Samaria would fall, they would probably, if they could, defect to the south, where they could become part of the land of Judah, but there would be some, always God preserves the few, who are the remnant.

In the northern kingdom, there never was a good king. Southern kingdom had a few good kings, mostly bad, but there was never a good one in the north. Nonetheless, there was always a remnant in the north.

It was in the northern kingdom that Elijah said, I alone am left, and God said, no, I've reserved 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal. That was in Israel, in the north. It was in the north that a hundred prophets were spared from Jezebel by a man named

Obadiah, who was in the king's court.

So there were a remnant of godly people, even in the north, and God is saying, that remnant will be preserved and God will continue to reign in their lives, but the city is going down, the drunkards are going to be trampled. Apparently, this is uttered at a time when Israel is still pretty much in good shape, before the Assyrians have arrived, because the verdant valleys are fruitful, and the flowers are in bloom, and the people are partying and drinking, and having a good time, and oblivious to any danger. So the prophecy must have been uttered before there was actual visible signs of danger.

And therefore, of course, it had to be revealed by God, because man was not able to anticipate it. But having said these things about Ephraim, he then says in verse 7, but these also have erred through wine. Now I read these also, as I said, because virtually all other translations read that way.

The Young's Literal Translation is probably the most literal, and it says these. Also the New American Standard, the ESV and the NIV, not all equally good translations, but all reflecting modern scholarship's opinion about the Hebrew text, they all say the same thing, these, not they. So if it was they, it would seem to be still talking about the same people as previous.

But now he's making a contrast. These people also, here, these ones in Jerusalem, they also are making the same mistake Israel made. These also have erred through wine and through intoxicating drink are out of the way.

The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink. They're swallowed up by wine. They're out of the way through intoxicating drink.

They err in vision. They stumble in judgment, for all the tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that no place is clean. They're so drunk that they're vomiting all over their tables.

This is a lovely scene of, you know, priests and prophets. The spiritual leaders of Judah. They're just a bunch of drunkards and disgustingly so, apparently.

Whom will he teach knowledge and whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from the milk, those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. For with stammering lips and another tongue he will speak to this people, to whom he said, this is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. Yet they would not hear, but the word of the Lord to them was precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.

That they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and caught. Now, this

section I just read is extremely confusing to commentators and rightly so. First of all, you see the same series of words in verse 10 as you find in verse 13, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.

What does that mean? This presents challenges for translators and commentators. The way it reads here, it could easily be taken that it's saying that God teaches line upon line, precept upon precept, a little at a time, and it would speak perhaps of, we would see it as talking about progressive revelation. God doesn't give all the information at once.

He, over time, gives one thing built on the previous thing he's given. And yet, commentators are fairly sure, and I don't know if this is just a vogue in modern scholarship or if there's absolute proof of this, but most commentators agree that this is a mockery, that these words in the Hebrew are the scornful men of Jerusalem mocking the prophet. Now, it's not obvious that this is so.

It may be somehow in the Hebrew more clear, but it's, I think, I have a feeling this is speculation, but this is where the commentators go with this. They say that the words of verse 9 are the reaction of the leaders of Jerusalem to Isaiah himself. They're mocking him.

Whom will he teach knowledge? You know, we're the leaders here, we're the priests and the prophets. Why should we listen to this man? Whom will he make to understand his message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breast? What does he think we are, babies? Does he think we're not wise and mature? Let him speak to infants, is what is generally taken to be the import of that particular verse. Now, by the way, it does, in fact, in verse 14, say, therefore, hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men.

And therefore, it may suggest that he is presenting the scornful response of these men to him. There may be other ways to interpret it, but I think scholars go for the way that seems to work best for them, and they may be right. I'm not always on the side of the scholars.

Sometimes I think they speculate too much, but I'm not sure that I have an alternative to this. That the scornful men of Jerusalem are scorning Isaiah, saying, you know, who do you think you're teaching here? Babies? Who are you going to teach anything to? But then the next line, for precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line. In Hebrew, these words have a certain sound, and the words are, tzav, latzav, tzav, latzav, kav, lakav, kav, lakav.

Now, you can tell there's some rhyme there, there's some basic sounds that are reused and so forth, and some scholars, maybe most, consider that this is a mimicry of baby talk. Now, it's not obvious to me, none of my babies said, kav, lakav, kav, lakav. You

know, that's not how my babies talk.

But it is said that this is the way that you would teach the alphabet to a Hebrew child. And that the sounds are teaching the child to make the sounds of a couple of the Hebrew letters of the alphabet. So that, as they've said, you know, let him teach the babies, and then they start imitating with maybe typical baby talk, how you teach a baby the alphabet.

And so this is what is one of the explanations of this strange passage that is given, that we have in verse 10, really, the scornful mockers who are mocking Isaiah as it were mimicking him exaggeratedly, as if he's talking to babies, as they had complained about at the end of verse 9. Now, the words, sav, lat, sav, and kav, lakav, actually do have meaning. And here, they're translated precept, must be upon precept, line upon line. In the New American Standard, it's order on order, line on line.

Substituting the word precept for order, but keeping the word line. This is also the same translation followed by, well, very similarly, by the Young's Living Translation, it's rule on rule, line on line. The NIV kind of paraphrases a little bit, do and do, rule on rule.

But the King James, New King James, RSV, ESV, all read pretty much the same, precept on precept, line on line. So obviously, these words, as they stand, don't communicate anything specific, because first of all, they're not a complete sentence. They are merely sounds.

Whether it is the actual meaning of these words, precept or order or rule on the one hand, and line on the other, whether those words mean anything, or whether it's just sounds that are mimicking a child speaking, is a hard call. But if they are to be translated with words like this, what does it mean? It's really, really challenging. And he says in verse 11, For with stammering lips and another tongue, he will speak to this people.

Now, Paul quotes this verse in a rather strange way. The way it apparently is meant by Isaiah, with people of a strange tongue, with stammering lips and another tongue, he will speak to this people, seems to mean the Assyrians. The Assyrians speak a different language than the Jews, and God's going to speak to the Jews by, they'll be hearing the Assyrians speaking in their streets.

They'll hear the Assyrian soldiers taking orders. That is, there will be a foreign language spoken in their midst. And it'll be God's way of giving them his message.

Their doom, basically. And that seems to be a reference to the Assyrians. Truly.

It says in Isaiah 33, where it's describing the Messianic age and the removal of oppressors. In Isaiah 33, 19 says, You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech beyond perception, or a stammering tongue that you cannot understand. This, in other words, unlike the Jews of Isaiah, who would be spoken to by God with people of a

stammering tongue that's imperceptible speech to them.

In the Messianic age, he says that's not going to be the case. You know, your foes and so forth will not be, God won't be speaking to you by bringing invaders on you. Now, the problem with this verse is the way that Paul quoted it.

I guess the quotation is more with Paul's quote than it is with the verse itself. It's hard to know exactly how Paul is thinking about this. Because he's talking to the church about the proper use of the gift of tongues in the assembly.

And in 1 Corinthians 14, 20 and 21, he says, Brethren, do not be children in understanding. However, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips, I will speak to this people, and yet for all that they will not hear me.

That, of course, is the quotation of the verse we're using. Actually, it's putting together parts of two verses in Isaiah 28. He says, Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers.

But prophesying is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe. So, somehow, by quoting Isaiah's words, Paul concludes tongues, therefore, are a sign to unbelievers. Well, it was certainly a sign to the unbelievers in Isaiah's day, saying that God is speaking to you.

The sign of his speaking to you will be through these men of stammering lips and another language that you don't understand. If their language sounds to you like stuttering. Isaiah seems to be saying, you mock my speech as if it's stammering, as if it's awkward, as if it's childish.

But God's going to speak to you through some serious other language here. Your invaders will be speaking another language, and God's speaking to you by their invasion, and by these men of other languages. But why does Paul use it the way he does? The interesting thing is that Paul uses that verse to conclude that God uses people with other tongues to speak to unbelievers.

Now, that is, of course, true on the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, people spoke with other tongues, and the unbelieving Jews heard it, and it was a sign to them that something had happened. And they weren't sure what to make of that sign.

And so they said, well, what's going on here? And Peter came, and he gave them an explanation for which he quoted Joel 2. And he said, this is what Joel spoke of in the last days. He says, Lord, I'll pour out my spirit on all flesh. And he talks about how the spirit will be poured out, and people will prophesy.

And then it says, he gives language of judgment following that. I should have turned to it

earlier. But in Acts 2, Peter quoting Joel, says in Acts 2.19, I will show wonders in heaven above, signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness, the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is the quotation from Joel.

Before the great and terrible and notable day of the Lord, which would be the destruction of Jerusalem, God will send signs. He'll pour out his spirit on Jerusalem before he judges it. The remnant will receive the spirit.

Then will come judgment. Perhaps what Peter is saying is in God using tongues in this way to get your attention. God is warning you of impending judgment through other tongues, just as he did in a sense in Isaiah's day.

Isaiah is saying that you hear those Assyrians talking outside your wall? That should tell you something. You're under judgment. And Peter and Paul perhaps both see a parallel there.

When God pours out his spirit, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues was something that could be interpreted as a sign that judgment was coming, as Isaiah had said. And so it's kind of a strange connection, as it often is. It often is a rather peculiar connection that the New Testament writers make to an Old Testament statement that they quote.

Now back in Isaiah 28, 12, it says, To whom he said, This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. Verse 12 here is paraphrasing Isaiah's message that has already been given to them, which they're rejecting. And he says, You're going to have to be spoken to rather more dramatically, because I've already given you a peaceable message, a message of rest.

If you would just trust in God, enter into his rest, and be refreshed rather than running off to Egypt and to Assyria and other places to find help. Just rest in the Lord. That's the message God has for you.

Rest. Well, he says, That's what God spoke to you through me. Very possibly he's thinking of the message that we read in chapter 30 in verse 15.

And we don't know that these chapters are arranged in the order that they were originally spoken. We have no idea. It may be that Isaiah 30 in verse 15 was earlier uttered to them, and he's referring back to it now.

But in that verse, Isaiah 30, 15, it says, For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest you shall be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. But you would not.

That is, God has told him to return from running off to Egypt for help and just be quiet and sit still and see the deliverance of God. As Moses said at the Red Sea to the Israelites, Be still and see the salvation of God. So that was the message of Isaiah to the people.

Be still and God will save you. And he's making reference to that as the message God has given them previously. In chapter 28, verse 12.

But they've rejected that. They would not hear. But the word of the Lord was to them.

And then we have this same series of syllables. Sob, la sob. Sob, la sob.

Cob, la cob. Cob, la cob. In other words, God, you're not listening to plain language.

God is going to speak to you in ways that sound strange to you. That they might go and fall backward and be broken, snared and caught. Even with these explanatory remarks, I realize it's still a bizarre passage and it may not even be the right explanation.

But this is what most scholars have arrived at now. That basically the precept upon precept, line upon line is a reference to sounds. Not so much the words, but the sounds that would be typically used in teaching a child, the alphabet.

And therefore, it's simply saying that Isaiah says you people talk like what I'm saying is baby talk. Well, that's what you, maybe that is how God's going to talk to you. Because he gave you a clearer message and you're not listening to that.

You're not really all that sophisticated and you're not listening to what God has to say. So he'll speak to you in ways that are unconventional. That you're not used to be spoken to.

Even through foreigners who have foreign language that you don't know. Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men who rule this people who are in Jerusalem. Because you have said, we have made a covenant with death.

And with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come up to us. For we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.

Of course, they wouldn't use that language. He's giving a parody of their attitude. What they had done was made a covenant with Egypt.

They probably would have said, we've made a pact with Egypt. Therefore, when Assyria comes through because of overflowing scourge, we'll be rescued by Egypt. But he's saying, you've just signed your death warrant by making a covenant with Egypt.

You've made a covenant with death, not Egypt. And when the overflowing scourge

comes through, you think that you'll have a refuge, but your refuge is a lie. You've got a refuge of lies, not of reality.

You're in denial. That's what he's saying. And he's going to come back to those very words in verse 18.

But in between, he sticks in a short messianic passage. In verse 16 and 17, he says, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. Whoever believes will not act hastily.

Also, I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plummet. The measuring line and the plummet are both used when a building has been constructed. A plum line, of course, you hold by the wall to see if it's plumb, if it's upright properly.

A measuring line would measure the horizontal measurements, but this is basically saying there's a building under construction. God is providing a foundation, which we know from the New Testament is Christ because Paul quotes this verse twice in Romans 9.33 and in Romans 10.11. And Peter quotes it in 1 Peter 2.6. So both Peter and Paul quote this verse as being about Christ. Two apostles have told us so.

Now, Christ is then seen as a foundation of Zion. Now, this is in the context of the destruction of Zion, or at least the judgment of Zion in Isaiah's day, or perhaps forestalled until Jeremiah's day. But Jerusalem's going down.

But nonetheless, there's always something that God's provided as an alternative. There's a new Zion. He's got a new foundation, a new Zion, and a new cornerstone.

And, of course, this is the Messiah. This new Zion is built on Christ. He is the foundation.

No other foundation can anyone lay than Christ Jesus, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3. And so the church is Zion, built upon this foundation of Christ. And it is built, as Paul said in Ephesians 2, I think it's verse 20 and 21, says that we're built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building grows into a holy temple in the Lord. We are a building growing.

And he talks about the measurements of this temple will be measured on the standard of justice and righteousness. Whether it's upright or not is what you determine with a plum line or plummet. It will be measured against the scale of righteousness to see if it's upright.

Its size will be determined, its dimension will be determined by justice. That is to say, those who are living in righteousness and justice will be within this city. That's the boundaries of the city.

Its perimeter is measured on the scale of justice. So if you're just, then you're in it. And

righteous, you're in it.

You're outside the boundaries if you're not just a righteous. The city's definition is essentially those who are righteous and just. And it says, and the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place.

The refuge of lies is, of course, the city of Jerusalem, the apostate city that have made a covenant with death, they say, and who trust in a refuge of lies. Under falsehood, they've hidden themselves, it says in verse 15. So there's some of this imagery being mixed together.

You've got the destruction of Jerusalem, but also thrown in there, but there's also this other Jerusalem. There's also these people who are built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, the true Jerusalem. They're not going to be swept away.

They've got a foundation. The refuge of lies is built on sand. And that's what Jesus, of course, said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

He said, whoever hears these words of mine and does them, that is the faithful remnant in Israel who hear the Messiah and obey Him, they're building a house on stone. They've got a foundation. The floods will come, but it will stand.

But those Jews who are hearing Him and did not do what He said, if you hear my words and don't do them, you've built your house on sand. And when the floods come, it's going down. And so that Israel that rejected Christ, when the floods came, the Roman invasion, their refuge of lies was swept away, as it says here.

But those who were followers of Christ had a firm foundation. They were in the Zion that is not going down, the Zion that's going up, the Zion that is staying up. And it's built on Christ.

Now, in referring to Christ as a cornerstone, we remember another important passage often quoted in the New Testament, sometimes alongside this one in Isaiah. There are some stone prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament that are sometimes mentioned together. Sometimes three of them are mentioned together.

This one, the one in Psalm 118 and the one in Isaiah 8 about the stumbling stone. The writers of the New Testament like to see Jesus as the stone, the cornerstone, but also a stumbling stone and quote different verses that refer to Him in that way. Alongside Isaiah 28, 16, they often quote Psalm 118 and verse 22.

This one is actually quoted by Jesus as well as the apostles in their writings. Jesus quoted this when He was about to tell the Jews that they were going to be rejected and the kingdom was going to be given to another nation that would bring forth the fruits. He said, have you not read what it says in your law? And He quoted Psalm 118, verse 22.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing. And it's marvelous in our eyes.

The imagery again of a building. There's a stone that God has provided to be the foundation of Zion. The builders, that is the rulers of natural Jerusalem, rejected Him.

The stone that they rejected has not become irrelevant. It has become the chief foundation stone of a new Zion. The rulers of the old Zion don't, they're not building according to God's blueprint.

He's supplying the cornerstone. The cornerstone dictates the shape and direction of the walls and things like that. The cornerstone is very determinative of the building.

And yet it doesn't fit the builders. That doesn't fit their pattern. They've got a different idea for Zion than God has.

So they reject the cornerstone God provides and they throw it aside. And before long they look around and lo and behold there's another building built around that cornerstone. Their building is going down.

That other building is being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets in whom the whole building fitly framed by every joint supplies is rising into a habitation of God. Anyway, we have this aside about the kingdom of God. But then it goes back to the destruction or the judgment on the people of Jerusalem in verse 18, Isaiah 28, 18.

Your covenant with death will be annulled and your agreement with Sheol will not stand. You've made a covenant but it's going to fall apart. When the overflowing scourge passes through, that's Assyria, then you will be trampled down by it.

As often as it goes out it will take you. For morning by morning it will pass over and day by day it will be terror just to understand the report. Now, I said Assyria and it is true that Assyria did flood through Judah and did wipe out everything except Jerusalem.

The reason Jerusalem did not fall when it would have is because of perhaps an unpredictable element, Hezekiah repented and besought God. He stopped seeking Egypt and he started seeking Yahweh and God spared the city. So, one could say that this prophecy about the scourge wiping out Jerusalem could be said to be that which would have been if there had been no repentance.

There's always conditions implied if not stated. Judgments can always be averted or at least many times, most of the time, by repentance and in this case it was. However, it's not a prophecy that's failed to come true because subsequently the Babylonians came through and Jerusalem didn't repent and it in fact was inundated and fell.

So, these prophecies came true at a later date about a hundred years later very much

like what we could see about Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. Jonah predicted it would fall in 40 days but it didn't because they repented but it did a hundred years later. So, you know, the prophecy did come true somewhat delayed because repentance bought them some time.

Come my... No, I'm in the wrong place here. Verse 20, For the bed is too short for a man to stretch out on. The covering is so narrow that he cannot wrap himself in it.

Now, remember God has called them to rest but they're not resting in God. They're resting in their own plans. Their own arrangements they made with Egypt is their confidence.

It's like they're... Now they can rest assured they're safe. He says, you're resting on a bed that'll give you no rest. Your feet are hanging off the end.

The bed's too short. Your covers are so narrow. You ever been in that situation where you're on a bed that's too short? Some of you, of course, never.

But some of us, I'm sure, have been in situations where, you know, the bed that someone gives you to sleep on at their house is so short your ankles are on the footboard, you know. And, I mean, it's hard to relax. You got to bend and lie diagonally because it's not a bed that's made for someone like you to recline on.

And the cover's too narrow. That's very graphic. Especially when two people are in a bed.

Heck, and sometimes blanket or covers can be too narrow because you just can't wrap a second person up in when one's all wrapped up in them. One person takes all the covers. But even when... Of course, I don't know that phenomenon.

But, I mean, I've heard of it. I've heard reports of that kind of thing. And, you know, even when you're sleeping alone, if you don't have an actual blanket, but you try to pull your coat over you or something... Some of you have never done this.

I've done this a lot because I've hitchhiked all over the place. I've slept in empty buildings and attics and things like that in my earlier life. I know very well what it's like to try to cover up when you don't have a blanket that's the right size.

You've got a coat and you pull it over you, but it's too small. You can't... You have to keep rearranging it to the part of your body that's getting cold, you know, and try to warm up different parts at a time. You just don't get any rest that way.

And that's the idea. The bed's short, the cover's too narrow. You can't get any rest.

You're resting in Egypt. You're not going to get any real rest that way. That's an inadequate arrangement for sleeping and for resting.

For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perizim, and he'll be angry as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his awesome work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act, or unusual act. Now, therefore, do not be mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a destruction determined even upon the whole land.

Now, therefore, don't be mockers, suggest that this could change. Because if you continue to be mockers as you are, is what he... Of course, he referred to them as scornful men in verse 14. You keep this attitude up, and your bonds are going to be strong.

You're going to go into captivity. You're going to be in trouble. But the implication is, if you don't be mockers, maybe this could be averted.

In other words, this is not an absolute threat. This is a conditional threat. Don't be mockers, or else this will happen to you.

I've seen this vision of what's going to happen if you continue like this. Now, verse 23 through 26 gives a parable. And verse 27 through 29 gives another parable.

They're both agricultural, but the first one is a parable about sowing seeds. And the other is a parable about reaping crops. And basically what he does, he points to the various ways in which farmers treat different kinds of grains.

You plant different grains in different kinds of soil. You prepare the soil differently. You even harvest them differently.

And basically what he's saying is, farmers have enough sense to discriminate what's needed in one case and what's needed in another case between different crops. Likewise, God is smart enough to know how to deal with different situations. People who repent, people who don't repent.

People who have more opportunity and are more culpable, and people who have less. God doesn't judge everyone just alike, but He's smart. He uses wisdom just like a farmer does.

In fact, the point of these parables is the farmer has this wisdom because God gave it to him. If God gave it to him, then God must have it too. You think God's stupider than a farmer? Where do you think the farmers get their ability to discriminate? Well, they got it from God.

That's what his point is. Give ear and hear my voice. Listen and hear my speech.

Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? No, of course he plows first, then he sows. He doesn't just keep replowing the same land eternally. He's preparing for

something.

Does he keep turning the soil and breaking the clods? When he has leveled his surface, does he not sow the black cumin? And scatter the cumin? And plant the wheat in rows? And the barley in the appointed place? And the spelt in its place? For He, that is God, instructs him in right judgment. His God teaches him. Okay, so farmers don't do exactly the same thing with every plant.

They put them in their proper place. They prepare the soil appropriately. Why? Because they got smart.

They're not stupid. They know how to do their job. Well, where'd they get that information? They got that wisdom from God.

He must be wise too then. For the black cumin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is the cartwheel rolled over the cumin. But the black cumin is beaten out with a stick and the cumin with a rod.

Bread flour must be ground. Therefore, he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horseman. Now, that is to say, you don't harvest something delicate like cumin with the same kind of vigor and tools that you would use to harvest wheat.

And when you thresh your wheat, you don't just keep doing that forever. You need to grind it. And you do different things for different crops is basically what he's saying.

He says, this also comes from the Lord of hosts who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance. So this is just a way of saying, you should know that God, He knows what He's doing. He knows how to differentiate in different situations.

He knows how to discern what's needed. You could deduce that from the fact that even farmers make such distinctions in their work. And where do you think they get that information? They get it from God.

He must be smart too. Then chapter 29, Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt. Obviously, that's Jerusalem.

Add year to year, let feasts come around, yet I will distress Ariel. There shall be heaviness and sorrow, and it shall be to me as Ariel. I will camp against you all around.

I will a siege against you with a mound, and I will raise siege works against you. The Assyrians did this, but then later the Babylonians and the Romans did this. You shall be brought down.

You shall speak out of the ground. Your speech shall be low out of the dust. Your voice shall be like a medium's out of the ground.

For your speech shall whisper out of the dust. In other words, you'll be dead. You're not going to be talking like you talk now.

Any talking you do is going to be like a ghost talking. Like the dead speaking. That's what he's talking about.

Now, Ariel, the name that is given here for the city that David dwelt in, in other words, Jerusalem, is sometimes translated Lion of God. There are many who say Ariel should be translated Lion of God. I've known people who've named their child Ariel with that translation in mind.

But many scholars say it actually means hearth of God, like the hearth in front of a fireplace, the place in front of the fire. And one could argue that the besieging armies are the fire of God's judgment. And they're right at the edge of Jerusalem.

So it's like a hearth. The fire is that close. The judgment of God is as much in proximity to Jerusalem as the fire is to a hearth in a fireplace.

Now, the fire is really perhaps seen to be God's judgment in this case, in the Assyrian or maybe the Babylonians or maybe the Romans. It's hard to know exactly which because it does talk about the city going down. The Assyrians didn't take it down.

The Babylonians and Romans both did. But the point is that even though it is armies that are this fire coming against it, it is God who's doing it. And therefore, God is the fire that they are dealing with.

In chapter 31, for example, in verse 9, chapter 31, verse 9 says, He, and this is talking about Assyria as you look at the previous verse, He should cross over to his stronghold for fear and his princes shall be afraid of the banner, says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem. So, this is interesting because Assyria probably was the fire of God's wrath against them. But once they repented, God's fire was in Hezekiah in Jerusalem and God sent out His angel and destroyed the Assyrians.

That's what verse 8 is talking about. God's deliverance of Judah from Assyria is what verse 8 and 9 refers to. But it says that God has His fire in Jerusalem like in a fireplace.

This idea of the hearth, no doubt, is connected to that. In chapter 33 and verse 14, it says, The sinners in Zion are afraid. Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites.

And they say, Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? God among His people is like devouring fire. Of course, if you are gold, it really just purifies you. If you are chaff, briars, and thorns, it burns you up.

Who can dwell with fire? Only, really, gold. Only things that are imperishable can dwell

with fire. Things that are chaff and worthless cannot.

And so, the sinners in Zion are finding it impossible to dwell in proximity with God. And so, ariel, if it means the hearth of God, as most scholars would contend, is referring to the fire of God is in or near or associated with Jerusalem. It can be God's fire of judgment against them when they're in trouble with Him.

Or it can be His fire of holiness within the city when it's a holy city that kind of makes it impossible for the apostate to survive in it. Anyway, the idea of fire seems to be associated with this name, Ariel, if it is speaking of a hearth. Now, chapter 29.5. Moreover, the multitude of your foes shall be like fine dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as the chaff that passes away.

Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly, you will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire. The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel, even all who fight against her and her fortress and distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams and, look, he eats, but he awakes and his soul is still empty.

Or as when a man thirsty dreams and, lo, he drinks, but he awakes and, indeed, he's still thirsty. He's faint, and his soul still craves. So the multitude of all the nations will be who fight against Mount Zion.

Now, again, we seem to have the morphing between the old and the new Zion. Certainly, verses 1 through 4 are talking about judgment on the Zion that is under judgment. But the judgment on the enemies of God's people, the enemies of Zion, is spoken of in this later portion, and it says they'll be frustrated.

They'll feel like they're winning, but they haven't won anything. They'll be like when a hungry man dreams that he's eating. He feels like he's satisfied, but he wakes up and says, oops, I haven't had any food at all.

I'm not satisfied. And the idea is that those who destroy Zion probably, I don't know, but this could be referring to Babylon destroying Jerusalem, and then to their chagrin finding out that Zion still is restored later on, and therefore the hunger to destroy it is not really sated. Or it could even refer to AD 70 where Josephus tells us that when Titus came to destroy Jerusalem, he believed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would be the end of Judaism and Christianity, because the Romans believed that Christianity was just a sect of Judaism.

The Romans couldn't understand monotheism. No nation believed in only one God except the Jews, but then the Christians did too, so it seemed like the Christians were just kind of a branch of Judaism. He thought destroy the temple and we get rid of these

two pests, Judaism and Christianity.

He was wrong though. He did get rid of Judaism, but if he hungered for the destruction of Zion, the Zion of God, built upon the foundation that Christ has laid, his hunger, he's only dreaming. He's only dreaming about victory because Christianity did survive.

Zion did continue. Not natural Zion though, but spiritual Zion. Now, verse 9, Pause in wonder, blind yourselves and be blind.

They are drunk, but not with wine. They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink. Probably staggering under grief and pain from invasion.

They're staggering like drunk people, but they don't have any alcohol in them. For the Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep and has closed your eyes, namely the prophets. He has covered your heads, namely the seers.

The prophets were the seers and God's taken out the prophets, so the eyes of the nation are closed. But this statement, the Lord has poured on you a spirit of deep sleep. Paul quotes this in Romans 11, 8 and says this applies to the Jews of his day.

So it may in fact be the first century judgment on Jerusalem in AD 70 that is in view here. God has poured out on the wicked in Jerusalem a blindness, a spirit of slumber. And Paul says that that continues to his own day.

The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, Read this, please. And he says, I can't, it's sealed. Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, Read this, please.

And he says, I'm not literate, I can't. In other words, the vision of the prophets is simply inaccessible. Whether it's a literate man or not, it's not going to be read.

An illiterate man can't read anyway. A literate man can't read this because it's sealed. God has sealed it up, meaning that God is no longer speaking through the prophets.

Whatever God has to say is inaccessible to these people because he's closed their eyes, removed the prophets from them. It's like if God's words were in a book, no one can read it for various reasons. It's just not something they can read.

Therefore the Lord said, Inasmuch as these people draw near to me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the commandment of men, therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among those people, a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden. This statement that people draw near with their mouths and remain far in their hearts is quoted, this verse 13, quoted by Jesus in Mark 7, verses 6 and 7. There's a parallel to

that in Matthew 15, verses 8 and 9, but Jesus quotes it about his generation. So Paul quotes verse 10 about his generation.

Jesus quotes verse 13 about his generation. It begins to look like this is talking about that generation, and therefore the destruction of Jerusalem as well as the deliverance of Zion are seen as the, in that generation, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and a new Zion was launched by Christ. Verse 15, Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark.

They say, who sees us and who knows us? Surely you have things turned around. Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay? For shall the thing made, say of him who made it, he did not make me. Or shall the thing form, say of him who formed it, he has no understanding.

So they're trying to hide their counsel from God, hide their ways from God. He says, you think the potter is as stupid as the clay? You guys are clay. Clay has no brains at all, but the potter has brains.

Can the clay pot say about the potter, he doesn't have an understanding just because the clay doesn't? In other words, these people are mistaken to think that they can fool God. He's not as stupid as they are. Now, this becomes then, the rest of this chapter, a messianic age passage.

Is it not a very little while till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest? Now, Lebanon is a forest. Lebanon would represent an uncultivated land where there's forests. I mean, forests grow wild in Lebanon.

But it's going to be like a cultivated field. Fruitful. The forest doesn't produce fruit.

On the other hand, the fruitful field will be turned into a forest, or to Lebanon. In others, there's going to be a reversal of things. Things will be turned upside down.

Notice he said in verse 16, surely you have turned things around, you people. You think you're the potter and he's the clay, or you think he's clay and you're clay, but it's the other way around. Now, likewise, God's going to turn things around.

The forest is going to become cultivated, and the cultivated is going to become a forest. Now, of course, the forest represents that which was not fruitful before, probably the Gentiles, but it'll become God's vineyard. It'll become God's field.

It'll become that from which God draws his fruit, the nation from which he'll get his fruit. But on the other hand, the cultivated field or vineyard that he had before is going to be turned into a forest, wilderness. That is, Jerusalem is going to be given over to no longer be cared for by God.

It'll just go to seed, but that which was not previously cared for by God, the wilderness, the Gentiles, will become his fruitful field. There's going to be a turning around of things from the way they have been in the past. In that day, the deaf shall hear the words of the book.

Now, remember the book that was sealed was the prophetic vision, which was concealed from the people of Jerusalem, but not these people. These people will hear God's words. The deaf, those who formerly could not hear it, will hear the words of the book.

And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord. There's that joy motif again.

And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one, which apparently means their enemy, which in this case could be the devil, or it could be, you know, any other kind of enemy, because church has had enemies besides the devil. There's been human enemies too.

But the terrible one is brought to nothing. The scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off, who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves at the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of naught. The people apparently in natural Jerusalem that was being judged is partly being judged because they turn justice around, and they'd make a man an offender.

They'd arrest him for doing the right thing, for telling the truth, for saying the word of God, and who reproves them. He's an offender to them. They're persecuting the prophets, in other words.

Therefore thus says the Lord God, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale. But when he sees his children, the work of my hands in his midst, they will hallow my name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel. These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmured will learn doctrine.

So Israel will see new children, probably Gentiles, that are brought in, and they will all fear the God of Israel. Now it says, these who erred in spirit will come to understanding. It suggests that not only, well it probably means the Gentiles, who had previously been pagans.

They had erred in spirit, but then they'll come to understanding as their disciple. As you go and make disciples of the nations, and teach them what Jesus said, they had, who had formerly erred, and who murmured, will actually learn the Messianic law and doctrine. So this is a passage again about the Messianic age.

Well, we've run out of time. I had actually hoped to get through all six of these chapters. We got through two.

But we're going to take some more when we come back. So let's take a brief break.