

Study 65: Isaiah, Part 21 Isaiah 28**Isaiah 28**

Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards,
to the fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley—

to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine!
2 See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong.

Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind,
like a driving rain and a flooding downpour,
he will throw it forcefully to the ground.

3 That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards,
will be trampled underfoot.

4 That fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley,
will be like figs ripe before harvest—
as soon as people see them and take them in hand,
they swallow them.

5 In that day the Lord Almighty
will be a glorious crown,
a beautiful wreath
for the remnant of his people.

6 He will be a spirit of justice
to the one who sits in judgment,
a source of strength
to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

7 And these also stagger from wine
and reel from beer:
Priests and prophets stagger from beer
and are befuddled with wine;
they reel from beer,
they stagger when seeing visions,
they stumble when rendering decisions.

8 All the tables are covered with vomit
and there is not a spot without filth.

9 "Who is it he is trying to teach?
To whom is he explaining his message?
To children weaned from their milk,
to those just taken from the breast?"

10 For it is:
Do this, do that,
a rule for this, a rule for that [Hebrew: *sav lasav sav lasav / kav lakav kav lakav* (probably meaningless sounds
mimicking the prophet's words); also in verse 13];
a little here, a little there."

11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues
God will speak to this people,

12 to whom he said,
"This is the resting place, let the weary rest";
and, "This is the place of repose"—
but they would not listen.

13 So then, the word of the Lord to them will become:
Do this, do that,

a rule for this, a rule for that;
a little here, a little there—
so that as they go they will fall backward;
they will be injured and snared and captured.

14 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers
who rule this people in Jerusalem.
15 You boast, “We have entered into a covenant with death,
with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement.
When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
it cannot touch us,
for we have made a lie our refuge
and falsehood [or *false gods*] our hiding place.”

16 So this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
the one who relies on it
will never be stricken with panic.
17 I will make justice the measuring line
and righteousness the plumb line;
hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie,
and water will overflow your hiding place.
18 Your covenant with death will be annulled;
your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand.
When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
you will be beaten down by it.
19 As often as it comes it will carry you away;
morning after morning, by day and by night,
it will sweep through.”

The understanding of this message
will bring sheer terror.

20 The bed is too short to stretch out on,
the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.
21 The Lord will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim,
he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon—
to do his work, his strange work,
and perform his task, his alien task.
22 Now stop your mocking,
or your chains will become heavier;
the Lord, the Lord Almighty, has told me
of the destruction decreed against the whole land.

23 Listen and hear my voice;
pay attention and hear what I say.
24 When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually?
Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil?
25 When he has leveled the surface,
does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin?
Does he not plant wheat in its place [meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain],
barley in its plot [meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain],
and spelt in its field?
26 His God instructs him
and teaches him the right way.

27 Caraway is not threshed with a sledge,

nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin;
caraway is beaten out with a rod,
and cumin with a stick.

28 Grain must be ground to make bread;

so one does not go on threshing it forever.

The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it,

but one does not use horses to grind grain.

29 All this also comes from the Lord Almighty,

whose plan is wonderful,

whose wisdom is magnificent.