

# Isaiah Chapters 28-29 – Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem; A Cornerstone in Zion; Listen to the Teaching of God; Woe to Jerusalem; The Blindness of Disobedience; Future Recovery of Wisdom!

## OBSERVATION

## INTERPRETATION

## APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 112 (1st floor, backside of the High School, facing Mac Arthur, near the east corner, adjacent to the High School office), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – [Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221](mailto:ptwente@gmail.com); email – [ptwente@gmail.com](mailto:ptwente@gmail.com) For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: [www.ptwente.com](http://www.ptwente.com) Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

### MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS: Edward Mote (1797-1874); Dallas Adult Choir

*1. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*Refrain: On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand.*

*2. When Darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil. (Refrain)*

*3. His oath, His covenant, His blood supports me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. (Refrain)*

*4. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found! Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne! (Refrain)*

### GENERAL OUTLINE OF ISAIAH: Referred to as the “Fifth Gospel” since the third century!

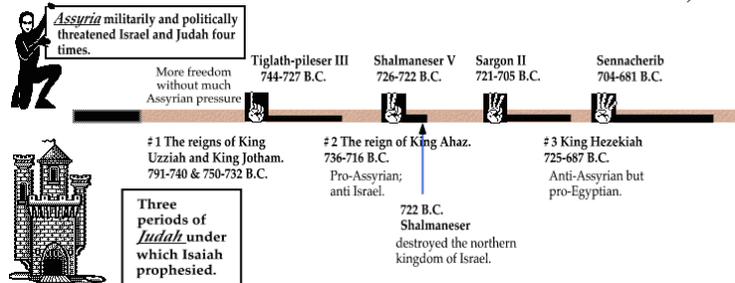
*Possible date of kings reign” - Uzziah, - 792-740; Jotham, - 750-736; Ahaz, - 735-720 Northern Kingdom of Israel falls to Assyria in 722BC; Hezekiah, - 715-699/686; Manasseh – 687-642*

*Isaiah’s time of prophecy - About a minimum of 40 years and possibly more than 60 years!*

*In the tenth year of Nabopolassar (616 BC) the Babylonians defeated the Assyrian army.*

*Cyrus takes Babylon. In October (539 BC), the Persian king Cyrus took Babylon.*

- I. THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD - CONFLICT AND VICTORY (Isa 1-39)
  - A. PROPHECIES CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM (Isa 1-12)
  - B. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NATIONS (Isa 13-27)
  - C. DELIVERANCE FOUND NOT IN EGYPT, BUT IN THE LORD (Isa 28-35)
  - D. HISTORICAL INTERLUDE (Isa 36-39)
- II. THE BABYLONIAN PERIOD - HOPE FOR TROUBLED TIMES (Isa 40-66)
  - A. THE ONE TRUE GOD VERSUS IDOLS (Isa 40-48)
  - B. LORD'S SERVANT WILL BRING SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERING (Isa 49-57)
  - C. THE FUTURE GLORY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, THE NEW ZION (Isa 58-66)



NO CLASSES – MON. SEPT. 16/TUES. SEPT. 17

### Isaiah – Bible Timeline

739 BC	Isaiah Complains of Zion's Corruption	<a href="#">Isaiah 1 - 5</a>
739 BC	Isaiah's Vision and Commission	<a href="#">Isaiah 6</a>
735 BC	Isaiah's Prophecy of Immanuel	<a href="#">Isaiah 7</a>
734 BC	Uriah/Zechariah Verification	<a href="#">Isaiah 8</a>
730 BC	Isaiah Prophecies a Child Is Born	<a href="#">Isaiah 9</a>
730 BC	Isaiah Prophecies Judgments Upon Israel	<a href="#">Isaiah 9:8</a>
730 BC	Isaiah Prophecies Judgment on Assyria	<a href="#">Isaiah 10</a>
730 BC	Isaiah Prophecies The Root of Jesse	<a href="#">Isaiah 11</a>
730 BC	Isaiah's Joyful Thanksgiving	<a href="#">Isaiah 12</a>
725 BC	Isaiah Prophecies against the Nations	<a href="#">Isaiah 13 - 22</a>
725 BC	Isaiah's Valley of Vision	<a href="#">Isaiah 22</a>
725 BC	Isaiah's Burden of Tyre	<a href="#">Isaiah 23</a>
725 BC	Devastation on the Earth	<a href="#">Isaiah 24</a>
725 BC	Isaiah's Songs of Praise	<a href="#">Isaiah 25 - 27</a>
725 BC	<b>Isaiah's Further Warnings</b>	<a href="#">Isaiah 28 - 32</a>
725 BC	Isaiah Prophecies a King Shall Reign	<a href="#">Isaiah 32</a>
725 BC	Isaiah Declares God's Judgments	<a href="#">Isaiah 33, 34</a>
725 BC	Isaiah Declares the Joyful Will Flourish in Zion	<a href="#">Isaiah 35</a>
712 BC	Hezekiah's Illness and Healing	<a href="#">2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38</a>
711 BC	Hezekiah Shows Treasures	<a href="#">2 Kings 20:12, Isaiah 39</a>
711 BC	Isaiah Prophecies Captivity and Restoration	<a href="#">Isaiah 40 - 66</a>
701 BC	Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem	<a href="#">2 Kings 18, Isaiah 36, 2 Chron. 32</a>
701 BC	Hezekiah's Prayer	<a href="#">2 Kings 19, Isaiah 37</a>

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OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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<p><i>Judgment on Ephraim and Jerusalem</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:1 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!</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, 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.</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, Will be trampled underfoot;</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:4 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.</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be For a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty To the remnant of His people,</i></p> <p><i>Isa 28:6 For a <u>spirit of justice</u> to him who sits in judgment, And for <u>strength</u> to those who turn back the battle at the gate.</i></p>	<p><b>Isaiah 28:1-29 - A WORD TO DRUNKARDS -</b> Isaiah 28 begins an eight-chapter section (28-35) mostly directed to the southern kingdom of Judah. Likely because of its effectiveness in addressing a sin present in a third party, and then applying it directly to the person, Isaiah will first speak of the sin of the northern kingdom, Israel and then switch his focus to Judah.</p> <p><u>vs. 1-4</u> A flood of judgment upon the drunkards of Ephraim. <i>To the drunkards of Ephraim</i>, another name for the northern nation of Israel, its prominent tribe. Ephraim was known for their drunkenness to the point that here the LORD directed Isaiah to directly address <i>the drunkards of Ephraim</i>. The Bible speaks out often against drunkenness. - <u>Pro 23:29-35; Eph 5:18 - be filled with the Spirit instead of being drunk; Rom 13:13; 1Co 5:11, 6:10, 11:21; Gal 5:21 and 1Pe 4:3.</u> Jesus warned against drunkenness in the last days (<u>Luk 21:34-36</u>). Our society pays an awful price for drunkenness; the direct effect on the drunkard is bad enough, but the extended costs are staggering. Drunkenness is heavily promoted in our culture, and advertising often targets young people, recruiting them to a future of heavy drinking. <i>Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim:</i> Like any other sin, drunkenness is connected to <b>pride</b>, so much so that Isaiah likens the <i>drunkards of Ephraim to a crown of pride</i>. Much of the self-hatred and self-despising drunkards feel is rooted in <b>too much focus</b> upon one’s self, which is the essence of pride. <i>Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower:</i> Drunkenness makes everything beautiful and good in our lives fade away. Many men and women have gone from the top to skid row because of drunkenness. <i>To those who are overcome with wine:</i> When alcohol <b>overcomes</b> us, we are in sin. When it impairs our senses, our thinking, our judgment, or our reflexes, we are <i>overcome with wine</i> and it is sin. <i>Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one:</i> The drunkard needs to know that God is stronger than the drunkard, stronger than the power of alcohol, stronger than anything. If the drunkard is powerless to stop his drinking, God has the power to help him stop - or the power to judge him (<i>the drunkards of Ephraim will be trampled underfoot</i>). <i>Like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; he eats it up while it is still in his hand:</i> The drunkard needs to learn the value of <b>delayed gratification</b>. The gratification of drinking may be intense and immediate, but it fades quickly and crashes hard. The drunkard must learn the value delaying immediate gratification for a future benefit, instead of eating the <i>fruit . . . while it is still in his hand</i>.</p> <p><u>vs. 5-6</u> The beauty of the <b>LORD, for a crown of glory</b>, replaces the faded beauty of Ephraim. <i>The LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty:</i> Sometimes when we see the faded <b>glory</b> that comes with sins like drunkenness, we can grow discouraged or depressed. But even if all the <b>glory</b> of man fades because of disobedience and sin, God’s <b>glory</b> remains. When we are completely “ungloried” because of the wreckage of sin, we can set our focus on the <b>glory</b> of the LORD. <i>For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment:</i> When our glory has faded because of our sin, we may lose our <b>judgment</b> and discernment. But then we can receive them from the LORD. <i>And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate:</i> When our <b>glory</b> has faded because of our sin, we may lose our <b>strength</b> and ability to fight. But then we can receive them from the LORD.</p>	<p><u>vs. 1-4</u> The northern ten tribes, called Ephraim were responding to the coming judgment on Israel by turning to getting drunk, just getting pretty much blotto, rather than facing up to the situation. A great lesson for us. One might wish that there was a strict prohibition against drinking alcohol in the Bible, but there isn’t. Paul recommended the use of wine to Timothy, knowing that is was more pure to drink than plain water (<u>1Ti 5:23</u>). The Bible regards drink, moderately used, as a gift from God (<u>Psa 104:15</u>). So, while the Bible allows the moderate use of alcohol, <u>it strictly condemns drunkenness</u>. However the law of love always trumps the law of liberty. It’s better to not take anything into your body that impairs our senses, out thinking, our judgment or our reflexes and can stumble others!</p> <p><u>vs. 5-6</u> There will be those faithful ones who will seek the Lord. This is always true. No matter how dark the world is, how deep it falls into sin, God always has His faithful remnant. So regardless of bad things get here on earth, we need to stay very close to the LORD to be sure we remain and will be a faithful remnant!</p>
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**INTERPRETATION**

**APPLICATION**

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*Isa 28:7 But they 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 are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

*Isa 28:8 For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean.*

*Isa 28:9 "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?*

*Isa 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

*Isa 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,*

*Isa 28:12 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.*

*Isa 28:13 But the word of the LORD was to them, "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.*

*vs. 7-8* The corruption of drunkenness in Judah. *They also*: Since Isaiah mentions *the priest and the prophet* in this section, it seems that *they also* refers to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. If the people of Ephraim had a problem with drunkenness, so did *they also*. They also have *erred through wine and through intoxicating drink are out of the way*: Drunkenness always leads to **error** and takes us *out of the way* - the way of wisdom and God's will. *The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink*: Drunkenness is something that can touch any person, at any stage of life. Even the *priest and the prophet* can find themselves under the tyranny of drunkenness (*swallowed up by wine*). *For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that no place is clean*: What vivid language the Bible speaks to us! Because of the way alcohol works, drunkenness leads to this kind of degradation and disgrace. Alcohol is a depressant; it effects people in a negative way, because it depresses and breaks down and effects their self-control, wisdom, balance and judgment.

*vs. 9-10* God's message to those who are ripe for judgment. The simple message and method of Isaiah's teaching is mocked. *Whom will he teach knowledge?* These are the words of the drunk, ungodly prophets and priests described in *Isa 28:7-8*. They ask Isaiah, the godly prophet, *Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message?* In their mocking minds, Isaiah's message is fit only for children (*Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?*) These two verses portray the sarcastic reaction Judah's leaders had to Isaiah's words of rebuke. They were **tired of Isaiah's strictness and of his recurring application of God's laws**. The string of syllables in verse 10 seem to indicate the Judean leaders regarded Isaiah's message as meaningless or as child's play. *Precept upon precept*: With this, the drunk, ungodly prophets and priests mock Isaiah's teaching. "It is too simple. It is simply *precept upon precept . . . line upon line . . . here a little, there a little*. We are so smart and spiritually sophisticated and advanced that we can go on to deeper things." In their mocking of Isaiah's message, they actually pay him a great compliment. It is a beautiful thing for God's truth to be presented *precept upon precept . . . line upon line . . . here a little, there a little*. When the word of God is **properly presented, there is something for both the simple and immature to receive, and also something for the great saint to rejoice in and be fed.**

*vs. 11-13* Isaiah warns of the consequences of rejecting the simple message of the LORD. *With stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people*: If the simple, straightforward message is rejected, God will find another way to communicate to the hard-hearted. He will send unusual messengers to bring the word (*1 Cor. 14:21*). The message of **rest** and **deliverance** (*this is the rest . . . this is refreshing* - In simple language they could understand, God offered them relief from their oppressors, but they would not listen.) It will be rejected (*they would not hear – Isaiah 30:15; Jeremiah 6:16*). But it wasn't the fault of the word of the LORD. *the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."* This is the blessed and effective way to present God's word: *precept upon precept, line upon line*. Isaiah takes the taunt of the drunkards and receives it as a compliment. God's messengers are to present **all of God's word**, without skipping a line, *presenting it simply*. The result of the **faithful** presentation of the word of the LORD for those who reject isn't good for them: *That they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and caught.*

*vs. 7-8* Now the priests were commanded not to drink wine or strong drink before they came into the temple of God to offer the sacrifices. But here they were getting drunk. The prophets are erring in the visions. Because of the alcoholism. It's a tragic thing that so many of our judges, and so many of our legislators are alcoholics. Tragic, because it causes you to err in judgment.

*vs. 9-10* The drinkers were telling Isaiah that he was so simplistic. That his teaching was only babies that had just been weened. For your *teaching is precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, there a little*. It's was to simplistic for us!

*vs. 11-13* This also implies that we can't receive all aspects of God's message at once. "It is an excellent thing that the gospel is taught us by degrees. It is not forced home upon men's minds all at once, but it comes thus, '*Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little*.' God does not flash the everlasting daylight on weak eyes in one blaze of glory, but there is at first a dim dawn, and the soft incoming of a tender light for tender eyes, and so by degrees we see.

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### INTERPRETATION

### APPLICATION

#### *A Cornerstone in Zion*

*Isa 28:14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,*

*Isa 28:15 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 to us, For we have made lies our refuge, And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves."*

*Isa 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:*

*"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried (trying) stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.*

*Isa 28:17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, And the waters will overflow the hiding place.*

*Isa 28:18 Your covenant with death will be annulled, And your agreement with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will be trampled down by it.*

*Isa 28:19 As often as it goes out it will take you; For morning by morning it will pass over, And by day and by night; It will be a terror just to understand the report."*

*vs. 14-15* The false confidence of sinful leaders. *You scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem:* Sadly, some of the simple and immature were those *who rule this people*. They needed to *hear the word of the LORD* just as everyone did. There is no one too high, too exalted, too mature, too advanced for the word of the LORD, and to hear it *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little*. *We have made a covenant with death:* The rulers of Jerusalem were extreme in their rejection of God, and felt they had an “agreement” with death and the grave (*Sheol*). They proudly believed *the overflowing scourge* of God’s judgment and correction would not come against them. *We have made lies our refuge:* This is their strength! This is their protection! What slender confidence!

*vs. 16-19* The security of the Messiah and the precarious place of sinners.

*Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation:* In contrast to the weak, narrow foundation of the wicked (*we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves*), **God has a solid foundation for our lives - a stone for a (spiritual) foundation. Behold, I lay in Zion.** It is God’s work. We are unable to provide the right kind of foundation for our lives, but God can lay a foundation for us. We are asked to *behold* God’s foundation, appreciate it, wonder at it, value it, and build our lives upon it. *A tried stone:* Our Messiah was *tried*, was tested, and was proven to be the glorious, obedient Son of God in all things.

*A precious cornerstone:* Our Messiah is *precious*, and a *cornerstone*. The cornerstone provides the lines, the pattern for all the rest of the construction. **The cornerstone is straight and true, and everything in the entire building lines up in reference to the cornerstone.** *A sure foundation:* Our Messiah is a *sure foundation*, and we can build everything on Him without fear. *Justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet:* In God’s building, it isn’t just as if He establishes the *cornerstone* and then walks away and allows the building to be built any way it pleases. Instead, He keeps the building straight with *justice* and *righteousness*. *The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place:* The ungodly leaders of Jerusalem *made lies* their *refuge*, and found a hiding place *under falsehood* (*Isa 28:15*). But the storms of life and God’s judgment would sweep away their *refuge of lies* and their *hiding place*. They had built on the wrong foundation, and would therefore see destruction. *Your covenant with death will be annulled:* The ungodly leaders of Jerusalem thought they made a “deal with death,” but will find that God will annul their *covenant with death*. When His *scourge* of judgment comes, they will surely *be trampled down by it*. And the scourge of judgment will not touch them lightly. *Morning by morning* and *by day and by night* they will feel the sting of God’s correction.

*vs. 14-15* They had no fear of death, and thought they had made friends with death and the grave. This same way of thinking is common in our modern world. The ungodly should fear death, because with death ends all opportunity for repentance, and their eternal doom is sealed. Satan so wants to make the wicked feel that death is their friend.

*vs. 16-19* The LORD is telling Jerusalem, now you’re trusting in that which cannot deliver you. **But I have laid in Zion for a foundation, something you can build upon, something that is sure. A precious stone.”** This is a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. Peter quotes this passage of scripture. **1Pe 2:6** *Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM (Jesus Christ!) WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME."* Other quotes – *Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14-15; Mat. 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20-17* – *Wicked vineyard servants; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33, 10:11* The foundation upon which we build our lives! Everyone of us is related to the Cornerstone. He is the standard to which we are to be compared with and to, not that of other men!

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**INTERPRETATION**

**APPLICATION**

*Isa 28:20 For the bed is too short to stretch out on, And the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it.*

*Isa 28:21 For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon—That He may do His work, His awesome work, And bring to pass His act, His unusual act.*

*Isa 28:22 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 earth.*

*Isa 28:23 Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my speech.*

*Isa 28:24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods?*

*Isa 28:25 When he has leveled its surface, Does he not sow the black cummin And scatter the cummin, Plant the wheat in rows, The barley in the appointed place, And the spelt in its place?*

*Isa 28:26 For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him.*

*Isa 28:27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod.*

*Isa 28:28 Bread flour must be ground; Therefore he does not thresh it forever, Break it with his cartwheel, Or crush it with his horsemen.*

*Isa 28:29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.*

*vs. 20-22* Advice to those ripe for judgment. *The bed is too short . . . the covering so narrow:* The rulers of Jerusalem needed to realize that their present place was precarious, and they could find no refuge where they were at right then. **For the LORD will rise up:** The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize that fighting against God was always a losing proposition. There was no way they could win that battle, because God would always *do His work, His awesome work*. At *Perazim*, the LORD accomplished a great victory, a great breakthrough for Israel in the days of David (*2Sa 5:20*). At *Gibeon*, the LORD accomplished a great victory for Israel in the days of Joshua (*Jos 10:11*). In those cases, the LORD fought for Israel, but if her leaders did not repent, they would soon find the LORD fighting *against* Israel. This use of God’s strength against His people is surely *His awesome* (or strange work because God usually fought for His nation, but here He will fight against them) *work*. **Now therefore, do not be mockers:** The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize the danger of mocking God with their “covenants with death” and haughty words against God.

*vs. 23-29* The timing of the farmer and the timing of God. *Give ear and hear my voice:* The rulers of Jerusalem had to listen to God’s word, and pay attention to His voice. *Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow?* The end of Isaiah 28 is a poem relating the work of God to the work of a farmer. A farmer doesn’t only plow; he knows when to stop plowing and when to level the ground, when to plant, and what to plant where. He uses different tools at different times, and works them all together to produce crops. In the same way, God knows what instruments to use in our life, and what time to use them. We don’t have to doubt or despair at what God is doing in our lives, because He is an expert farmer, working on us with all His wisdom. He used the proper instrument and procedure at the proper time to accomplish His purposes among His stubborn people.” *Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance:* The phrase *wonderful in counsel* is the same words used to describe the Messiah in *Isa 9:6* (*Wonderful Counselor*). It reminds us of the perfect timing and wisdom of God’s work in our lives.

*vs. 20-22* Rejection of God gives no peace, no rest, and no warmth. What can be worse than trying to sleep in a *bed* that is *too short*? With trying to keep warm with something so narrow that he cannot wrap himself in it? Yet this is a picture of the world, working, striving, longing for their bed - and when they gain it, it is too short and has no proper blankets! The child of God, on the other hand, is given rest and peace and covering by Jesus Christ. We shouldn’t long for the short beds and narrow coverings of the world. We should thank God for the place He gives us in Jesus Christ and enjoy it!

*vs. 23-29* This speaks of the farmer who plows, preparing the soil for seed. Each crop, must be planted and harvested a little differently. The farmer needs discernment on knowing how to tend any given crop. This is true spiritually as well. We must handle situations with different people carefully, not depending on programs and formulas, but carefully discerning what God would have for us as in the tilling of soil, planting of seed and in the gathering and harvesting. This also speaks of how the LORD prepares and handles His believers – individually, to produce the particular fruit He wants from each of us!

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**OBSERVATION**

**INTERPRETATION**

**APPLICATION**

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***The Siege of Jerusalem***

**Isa 29:1** "Woe to Ariel (*Lion of God*, or using different marks to the same consonants, it means *burning hearth*), to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add year to year; Let feasts come around.

**Isa 29:2** Yet I will distress Ariel; There shall be heaviness and sorrow, And it shall be to Me as Ariel (as a burning hearth).

**Isa 29:3** I will encamp against you all around, I will lay siege against you with a mound, And I will raise siegeworks against you.

**Isa 29:4** 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; And your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

**Isa 29:5** "Moreover the multitude of your foes Shall be like fine dust, And the multitude of the terrible ones Like chaff that passes away; Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly.

**Isa 29:6** 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.

**Isa 29:7** 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.

**Isa 29:8** 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 thirsty man dreams, And look—he drinks; But he awakes, and indeed he is faint, And his soul still craves: So the multitude of all the nations shall be, Who fight against Mount Zion."

**vs. 1-4** The coming distress upon Jerusalem. The LORD humbles a proud Jerusalem. **Woe to Ariel:** The name **Ariel** means *Lion of God*, and in this passage is used as a symbolic reference to Jerusalem (*the city where David dwelt*). The only place where **Ariel** is used as a name for Jerusalem is in this chapter of Isaiah, and the word only appears one other time in the Old Testament (as the name of a priest in **Ezr 8:16**). There is some question as to if **Ariel** ( 'ārîy'êl) means *Lion of God* (the literal translation) or *an altar, burning hearth (har'êl) for burning*, which is a very similar word in Hebrew (used in **Eze 43:15-16**). – the difference is the consonants that are used. In the original there were only vowels used in the Hebrew. If it is to be understood as *an altar for burning*, then the idea is that “The fighting and bloodshed around Jerusalem would make the city like a giant place of sacrifice. It can also be used with its meaning as the- *Lion of God*. **Yet I will distress Ariel:** Jerusalem may have this high opinion of itself, but it is not out of the reach of God’s hand of judgment. Instead of the routine of *year to year* and the *feasts*, God will send *heaviness and sorrow*. If Jerusalem sees itself as a *lion*, then God will fight against them with the same fury a man would have against a lion (*it shall be to Me as Ariel*). **I will encamp against you all around:** Using the images of warfare for that day, God promises to battle against Jerusalem, and to conquer her (*You shall be brought down*). In all of this, the LORD will bring down the lofty self-image Jerusalem has of itself. Instead of calling herself **Ariel**, and *the city where David dwelt*, their *speech shall be brought low, out of the dust*. Instead of loud boasts, their *speech shall whisper out of the dust*.

**vs. 5-8** The LORD protects and delivers a humbled Jerusalem. **The multitude of your foes shall be like fine dust:** The closing image in the previous verses was Jerusalem groveling in the dust. Now, the LORD uses another image, spun off of the idea of *dust* - Jerusalem’s enemies will scattered as *fine dust*. God will humble Jerusalem in the dust, and then scatter her enemies like *fine dust*, like *chaff that passes away*. **You will be punished:** This seems to be directed against the nations that come against Jerusalem. God will allow them to come against the city, and to humble it, but God will punish the nations that have come against His city. **It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams:** Because the LORD will protect Jerusalem, the nations that come against her will ultimately be frustrated. They will be like a man who dreams of food, but wakes up hungry. They will dream of fulfillment, but be unfulfilled.

**vs. 1-4** The feeling in **Isa 29:1** is that Jerusalem is proud (**Ariel**), resting on its spiritual heritage instead of its present reality (*the city where David dwelt!*), and living for present pleasures without concern for God (*Add year to year; let feasts come around*). Yet, because of the failure to turn to God, they will be judged. God Himself will encamp against them all around. Near term He will use Assyria to do just this, resulting in their being humbled and brought down. Jerusalem’s voice will come from the earth like that of a medium spirit, which would be fitting for her sins of wanting to speak to the dead. How we need to be careful of these sins!

**vs. 5-8** Now God announces His judgment on Jerusalem’s foes. Even though He uses others to judge His people, it doesn’t mean that the instrument He uses is righteous. God can use holy and unholy instruments. Here God reminds the foes of Jerusalem of their dream of destroying Jerusalem is not going to come to pass. Our dreams may be like that, but God’s will and purpose will come to pass, regardless of the plans of nations or foes. He is sovereign. Blessed are those whose trust is the LORD!

## Isaiah Chapters 28-29 – Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem; A Cornerstone in Zion; Listen to the Teaching of God; Woe to Jerusalem; The Blindness of Disobedience; Future Recovery of Wisdom!

### OBSERVATION

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### INTERPRETATION

### APPLICATION

*Isa 29:9 Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink.*

*Isa 29:10 For the LORD has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers.*

*Isa 29:11 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 cannot, for it is sealed."*

*Isa 29:12 Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate."*

*Isa 29:13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near 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,*

*vs. 9-12* The spiritual blindness of Jerusalem - *Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind!* Jerusalem's pride has made them spiritually *blind*, and spiritually *drunk*. The LORD tells Jerusalem to *pause and wonder* at this, because though they do it to themselves, they lack the self-awareness to see their condition. *They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink:* This is *not* seen as a "blessing from the Spirit of the LORD." This is a *curse*, both self induced and sent from the LORD. This speaks powerfully to those today who promote the idea of God "blessing" His people with being "drunk in the Spirit." Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God *sent* something: the LORD *poured out on* them *the spirit of deep sleep*. As drunks will "sleep it off," so the LORD will send blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem into the lethargy and vulnerability of spiritual sleep. But a drunk can become sober after sleep; for those who are spiritually drunk, sleep worsens their condition. Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God took away something: He *has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets*. As a drunk has blurred vision and poor perception, so God *closed* the spiritual eyes of the nation - *namely, the prophets*. The prophets were silent, and the word of God was neglected because the people *wanted* it that way. In silencing the *prophets* and the *seers*, God simply gave Jerusalem what she wanted. (*Amo 8:11-12*) The spiritual illiteracy of Jerusalem. 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 cannot, for it is sealed.*" Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "*Read this, please.*" And he says, "*I am not literate*". Isaiah compared Jerusalem to the blind and to the drunk. Now, he compares them to the illiterate. But this isn't a literal literacy, because the *literate* man receives the *vision* of God, but to him it is like a *sealed* book. When the book of the vision is brought to the *illiterate* man, he does no better (*I am not literate*).

*v. 13* Why the LORD sends spiritual blindness upon Jerusalem. *These people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me:* Jerusalem knew how to *talk the spiritual talk*, but their *hearts* were *far from* God. You can't always tell a person's heart by what they *say*. You can't always tell a person's heart by what they *do*. Though only God can really know the heart, the closest we can come is by looking at the *whole of their life* - not just what they say or do, and especially not only at how they act at church or among Christians. Jesus said, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks* (*Mat 12:34*). This is a true - but not absolute - principle, because people can *draw near to* God *with their mouths and honor* the LORD *with their lips*, and their hearts can still be *far from* God. Of course, their speech will betray them at one time or another - but just maybe never at church! How did their hearts get far from God? They *have removed their hearts far from Me*. God doesn't move away from His people; they remove their hearts from Him. *And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men:* The people of Jerusalem had no fear of God in themselves; it had to be *commanded* by others. Their hearts did not respond to God, but only to men.

*vs. 9-12* We can see an important truth here. The LORD says to the people, because they chose to show nor feel any interest, enthusiasm, or concern, they would remain unenlightened, That is, neither the educated nor the uneducated ones would have understanding of the Word. If you don't want to understand Scripture, you won't! If you're not interested in doing the will of God or knowing the heart of God, the Bible will become meaningless to you. Regardless of your education level, you will find the Word to be dry, boring and an unsolvable mystery. What a difference it makes when we approach it, saying, "Lord, today, use these Scriptures to change my life, convicting me of sin and to change my attitude and my heart!" Lord, help me to be completely motivated by my love for You!

*v. 13* This manner of talking the talk, but not having the heart, didn't end in Isaiah's day. Jesus quoted this passage from Isaiah when He rebuked the religious leaders of His day for their hypocrisy (*Mat 15:7-9, Mar 7:6-7*). It didn't end in Jesus' day either! We can easily see this in our own hearts when we worship. Often we sing heartily but are not paying any attention to what we are singing about. One must approach worship intending to be involved and engaged in expressing our hearts to the LORD!

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<p><i>Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this 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."</i></p> <p><i>Isa 29:15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"</i></p> <p><i>Isa 29:16 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 formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?</i></p>	<p><b><i>vs. 14-16 The wisdom of their wise men shall perish:</i></b> Because Jerusalem’s pride had led them into spiritual blindness, sleep, drunkenness, illiteracy, and hypocrisy, God will destroy the <b><i>wisdom of their wise men</i></b>. Their <b><i>wise men</i></b> promoted the pride that led to all these evils! Isaiah calls this a <b><i>marvelous work and a wonder</i></b>, for God to reject the wisdom of man and to display His wisdom. Paul was also amazed at the “wisdom” of man, and how it compared to the “foolishness” of God: (<b><i>1Co 1:21-25</i></b>) <b><i>Who sees us?</i></b> In their false wisdom, the proud people of Jerusalem thought they could hide their thoughts (<b><i>hide their counsel</i></b>) and their deeds (<b><i>their works are in the dark</i></b>) from the LORD. <b><i>Surely you have things turned around!</i></b> They thought they could hide from the LORD, and that they had Him all figured out. The truth is turned around! The LORD has them all figured out, and they really don’t know God at all. <b><i>Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay:</i></b> The people of Jerusalem made the terrible mistake of <b><i>raising</i></b> themselves up, and <b><i>lowering</i></b> God at the same time. So, for them, the <b><i>clay</i></b> was just as worthy, just as intelligent, just as powerful, as the <b><i>potter</i></b> was! <b><i>For shall the thing made say of him who made it, “He did not make me”?</i></b> Indeed, man says exactly this today. Man looks at God our Creator, and says, <b><i>“He did not make me.”</i></b> For the LORD and His prophet, this was absolutely absurd, but today it passes for high science! <b><i>Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?</i></b> Indeed, man says exactly this today. Instead of seeing the absolute need for an intelligent designer who created all things, many believe that chance - absolute blind, random, purposeless chance, having no <b><i>understanding</i></b> at all - brought all things into being. We need to remember the context of the whole chapter - the pride and blindness of Jerusalem. It is perhaps the height of man’s pride and blindness to reject the LORD as our creator.</p>	<p><b><i>vs. 14-16</i></b> Do you ever think the LORD doesn’t know what I’m doing. He doesn’t really see or know what I’m thinking? Do we ever consider like a clay pot made by a potter, that the pot knows more than the potter or than the One who made us and formed us knows less then we ourselves? In reality, our LORD not only knows everything we have ever done or thought in the past, He knows everything that we will ever do or think now, and forever!</p>
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*Isa 29:17 Is it not yet a very little while Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?*  
*Isa 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*  
*Isa 29:19 The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.*  
*Isa 29:20 For the terrible one is brought to nothing, The scornful one is consumed, And all who watch for iniquity are cut off—*  
*Isa 29:21 Who make a man an offender by a word, And lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, And turn aside the just by empty words.*

*Isa 29:22 Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, Nor shall his face now grow pale;*  
*Isa 29:23 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.*  
*Isa 29:24 These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, And those who complained will learn doctrine."*

**vs. 17-21** A promise of restoration. Sight for the spiritually blind, justice for the wicked. *Is it not yet a very little while*: God’s restoration will come, and all things considered, it is in a *very little while*. It may not seem so to us when we are in the midst of a trial, but it is true. *Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?* Lebanon was known for its mighty forests, which would be brought low and **turned into a fruitful field**. On the other hand, the *fruitful field* would become *as a forest*. God would cut one down and raise another up. *The deaf shall hear . . . the eyes of the blind shall see*: When God’s people are restored, pride no longer prevents them from hearing God’s word or seeing God’s work. Just as much as these are miracles in the natural realm, they are miracles in the spiritual realm also. We need to humbly seek God for ears to hear and eyes to see. *The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD*: Joy is the proper reward for **the humble**. When we are *humble* - having an accurate estimation of ourselves, and a proper perspective of ourselves in relation to God and others - our lives are filled with the most **joy**. The *humble* and the *poor* have their joy **in the LORD**. He is a constant source of joy that can never be taken away! Pride is the enemy of joy. We can be proud and have *fun*, we can be proud and have *success*, we can be proud and experience *excitement*, and we can be proud and be *happy* because of happy circumstances. But we cannot be proud and have **joy in the LORD**, or to whatever degree we are proud, we are missing **joy in the LORD**. The proud can never have **joy in the LORD** if they are in humble or poor circumstances. *The terrible one is brought to nothing*: The work of the LORD does not stop at restoring His corrected people. It extends to bringing justice upon the wicked. Singled out for judgment by the prophet are those who have no sense of proportion or justice: *Who make a man an offender by a word . . . turn aside the just for a thing of naught.*

**vs. 22-24** The restoration of God’s people. *Jacob shall not now be ashamed*: Significantly, God addresses His people as *Jacob* in this promise of restoration. The name *Jacob*, given to the father of the 12 tribes, is not complimentary. It has the idea of a “con-man” or a “trickster.” Anyone who is really a *Jacob*, has good reason to **be ashamed**, but when God restores His people, even the “Jacobs” *shall not now be ashamed*. *When he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name*: The picture is of the patriarch Jacob looking over his descendants, and no longer being *ashamed* of them, because they now *hallow* the name of the LORD, and respect the holiness of the LORD. *These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmured will learn doctrine*: Finally, in God’s day of restoration, the truth is taught and known and exalted. Those *who erred in spirit* now have *understanding*, and those who *murmured* know better because they know the truth. (*Isa 45:17; Isa 49:23; Isa 50:7; Isa 54:4*). After the salvation of Israel in the end time, the children of Jacob will no longer cause their forefathers to blush over their wickedness.

**vs. 17-21** What a day that will be!. When Christ comes back, everything on earth – geographically, financially and relationship wise will be made right at last!

**v. 22-24** Israel’s forefathers will not longer be ashamed of the unbelief of their descendants. People who were previously murmuring would now be discussing the things of God. Today believers would sanctify the name of God because it’s a holy name. We should be treating it that way!

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