

Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Woes: Israel's Leaders (c. 704–702 BC)

Isaiah 28

Woe to the Fading Wreath of Ephraim

- 1 Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
And to the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
Which is at the head of the fertile valley
Of those who are overcome with wine!
- 2 Behold, the Lord has a strong and mighty *agent*;
As a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction,
Like a storm of mighty overflowing waters,
He has cast *it* down to the earth with *His* hand.
- 3 The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim is trodden under foot.
- 4 And the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
Which is at the head of the fertile valley,
Will be like the first-ripe fig prior to summer,
Which one sees,
And as soon as it is in his hand,
He swallows it.
- 5 In that day the LORD of hosts will become a beautiful crown
And a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people;
- 6 A spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment,
A strength to those who repel the onslaught at the gate.

Failure of Judah's Priests and Prophets

- 7 And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink:
The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,
They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink;
They reel while having visions,
They totter *when rendering* judgment.
- 8 For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a *single clean* place.
- 9 "To whom would He teach knowledge,
And to whom would He interpret the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* taken from the breast?"
- 10 "For *He* says,
'Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,
A little here, a little there.'"
- 11 Indeed, He will speak to this people
Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, [[1 Cor 14:21](#)]
- 12 He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary,"
And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.
- 13 So the word of the LORD to them will be,
"Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,
A little here, a little there,"
That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive.

Leaders of Judah Reject God’s Cornerstone—The Messiah

- 14 Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers,
Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,
- 15 Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we have made a pact.
The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by,
For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.”
- 16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone,
A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed.
He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed. (LXX “be put to shame”). [[Rom 9:33](#); [10:11](#); [1 Pet 2:6](#)]
- 17 “I will make justice the measuring line
And righteousness the level;
Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies
And the waters will overflow the secret place.
- 18 “Your covenant with death will be canceled,
And your pact with Sheol will not stand;
When the overwhelming scourge passes through,
Then you become its trampling *place*.
- 19 “As often as it passes through, it will seize you;
For morning after morning it will pass through, *anytime* during the day or night,
And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means.”
- 20 The bed is too short on which to stretch out,
And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in.
- 21 For the LORD will rise up as *at* Mount Perazim,
He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon,
To do His task, His unusual task,
And to work His work, His extraordinary work.
- 22 And now do not carry on as scoffers,
Or your fetters will be made stronger;
For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts
Of decisive destruction on all the earth.

A Parable of the Farmer: Accept God’s Wisdom

- 23 Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my words.
- 24 Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed?
Does he *continually* turn and harrow the ground?
- 25 Does he not level its surface
And sow dill and scatter cummin
And plant wheat in rows,
Barley in its place and rye within its area?
- 26 For his God instructs and teaches him properly.
- 27 For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin;
But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.
- 28 *Grain for* bread is crushed,

Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever.
 Because the wheel of *his* cart and his horses *eventually* damage it,
 He does not thresh it longer.

- 29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts,
 Who has made *His* counsel wonderful and *His* wisdom great.

Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Woes: Religious Hypocrisy (c. 704–702 BC)

Isaiah 29:1–14

Jerusalem Besieged, But Its Enemies Disappear

- 1 Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city *where* David *once* camped!
 Add year to year, observe *your* feasts on schedule.
- 2 I will bring distress to Ariel,
 And she will be *a city of* lamenting and mourning;
 And she will be like an Ariel to me.
- 3 I will camp against you encircling *you*,
 And I will set siegeworks against you,
 And I will raise up battle towers against you.
- 4 Then you will be brought low;
 From the earth you will speak,
 And from the dust *where* you are prostrate Your words *will come*.
 Your voice will also be like that of a spirit from the ground,
 And your speech will whisper from the dust.
- 5 But the multitude of your enemies will become like fine dust,
 And the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away;
 And it will happen instantly, suddenly.
- 6 From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise,
With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.
- 7 And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel,
 Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her,
 Will be like a dream, a vision of the night.
- 8 It will be as when a hungry man dreams—
 And behold, he is eating;
 But when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied,
 Or as when a thirsty man dreams—
 And behold, he is drinking,
 But when he awakens, behold, he is faint
 And his thirst is not quenched.
 Thus the multitude of all the nations will be
 Who wage war against Mount Zion.

The Blindness of Prophets and People

- 9 Be delayed and wait,
 Blind yourselves and be blind;
 They become drunk, but not with wine,
 They stagger, but not with strong drink.
- 10 For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep,
 He has shut your eyes, the prophets;
 And He has covered your heads, the seers. [[Rom 11:8](#)]

11 The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, “Please read this,” he will say, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”

12 Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, “Please read this.” And he will say, “I cannot read.”

13 Then the Lord said,

“Because this people draw near with their words

And honor Me with their lip service,

But they remove their hearts far from Me,

And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*, [[Matt 15:8–9](#); [Mark 7:6–7](#)]

14 Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous;

And the wisdom of their wise men will perish,

And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.” [[1 Cor 1:19](#)]

Isaiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Book of Woes: Rebellion and Pride (c. 704–702 BC)

Isaiah 29:15–24

15 Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD,

And whose deeds are *done* in a dark place,

And they say, “Who sees us?” or “Who knows us?”

16 You turn *things* around!

Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay,

That what is made would say to its maker, “He did not make me”;

Or what is formed say to him who formed it, “He has no understanding”? [[Rom 9:20](#)]

17 Is it not yet just a little while

Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field,

And the fertile field will be considered as a forest?

18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book,

And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. [[Matt 11:5](#); [Luke 7:22](#)]

19 The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD,

And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished,

Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off;

21 Who cause a person to be indicted by a word,

And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate,

And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.

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 turn pale;

23 But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst,

They will sanctify My name;

Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob

And will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

24 “Those who err in mind will know the truth,

And those who criticize will accept instruction.