

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 The splendid crown of Ephraim's drunkards is doomed,
the withering flower, its beautiful splendor,
situated at the head of a rich valley,
the crown of those overcome with wine.
- 2 Look, the sovereign master sends a strong, powerful one.
With the force of a hailstorm or a destructive windstorm,
with the might of a driving, torrential rainstorm,
he will knock that crown to the ground with his hand.
- 3 The splendid crown of Ephraim's drunkards
will be trampled underfoot.
- 4 The withering flower, its beautiful splendor,
situated at the head of a rich valley,
will be like an early fig before harvest—
as soon as someone notices it, he grabs it and swallows it.
- 5 At that time the LORD who commands armies will become a beautiful crown
and a splendid diadem for the remnant of his people.
- 6 He will give discernment to the one who makes judicial decisions,
and strength to those who defend the city from attackers.

Failure of Judah's Priests and Prophets

- 7 Even these men stagger because of wine,
they stumble around because of beer—
priests and prophets stagger because of beer,
they are confused because of wine,
they stumble around because of beer;
they stagger while seeing prophetic visions,
they totter while making legal decisions.
- 8 Indeed, all the tables are covered with vomit;
no place is untouched.
- 9 Who is the LORD trying to teach?
To whom is he explaining a message?
Those just weaned from milk!
Those just taken from their mother's breast!
- 10 Indeed, they will hear meaningless gibberish,
senseless babbling,
a syllable here, a syllable there.
- 11 For with mocking lips and a foreign tongue
he will speak to these people. [\[1 Cor 14:21\]](#)
- 12 In the past he said to them,
"This is where security can be found.
Provide security for the one who is exhausted!
This is where rest can be found."
But they refused to listen.
- 13 So the LORD's word to them will sound like
meaningless gibberish,
senseless babbling,
a syllable here, a syllable there.
As a result, they will fall on their backsides when they try to walk,
and be injured, ensnared, and captured.

Leaders of Judah Reject God's Cornerstone—The Messiah

- 14 Therefore, listen to the LORD's word,
you who mock,
you rulers of these people
who reside in Jerusalem!

- 15 For you say,
 “We have made a treaty with death,
 with Sheol we have made an agreement.
 When the overwhelming judgment sweeps by
 it will not reach us.
 For we have made a lie our refuge,
 we have hidden ourselves in a deceitful word.”
- 16 Therefore, this is what the sovereign master, the LORD, says:
 “Look, I am laying a stone in Zion,
 an approved stone,
 set in place as a precious cornerstone for the foundation.
 The one who maintains his faith will not panic (LXX “be put to shame”). [[Rom 9:33](#); [10:11](#); [1 Pet 2:6](#)]
- 17 I will make justice the measuring line,
 fairness the plumb line;
 hail will sweep away the unreliable refuge,
 the floodwaters will overwhelm the hiding place.
- 18 Your treaty with death will be dissolved;
 your agreement with Sheol will not last.
 When the overwhelming judgment sweeps by,
 you will be overrun by it.
- 19 Whenever it sweeps by, it will overtake you;
 indeed, every morning it will sweep by,
 it will come through during the day and the night.”
 When this announcement is understood,
 it will cause nothing but terror.
- 20 For the bed is too short to stretch out on,
 and the blanket is too narrow to wrap around oneself.
- 21 For the LORD will rise up, as he did at Mount Perazim,
 he will rouse himself, as he did in the Valley of Gibeon,
 to accomplish his work,
 his peculiar work,
 to perform his task,
 his strange task.
- 22 So now, do not mock,
 or your chains will become heavier!
 For I have heard a message about decreed destruction,
 from the sovereign master, the LORD who commands armies, against the entire land.

A Parable of the Farmer: Accept God’s Wisdom

- 23 Pay attention and listen to my message!
 Be attentive and listen to what I have to say!
- 24 Does a farmer just keep on plowing at planting time?
 Does he keep breaking up and harrowing his ground?
- 25 Once he has leveled its surface,
 does he not scatter the seed of the caraway plant,
 sow the seed of the cumin plant,
 and plant the wheat, barley, and grain in their designated places?
- 26 His God instructs him;
 he teaches him the principles of agriculture.
- 27 Certainly caraway seed is not threshed with a sledge,
 nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin seed.
 Certainly caraway seed is beaten with a stick,
 and cumin seed with a flail.
- 28 Grain is crushed,
 though one certainly does not thresh it forever.
 The wheel of one’s wagon rolls over it,
 but his horses do not crush it.
- 29 This also comes from the LORD who commands armies,

who gives supernatural guidance and imparts great wisdom.

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 Ariel is as good as dead—
Ariel, the town David besieged!
Keep observing your annual rituals,
celebrate your festivals on schedule.
- 2 I will threaten Ariel,
and she will mourn intensely
and become like an altar hearth before me.
- 3 I will lay siege to you on all sides;
I will besiege you with troops;
I will raise siege works against you.
- 4 You will fall;
while lying on the ground you will speak;
from the dust where you lie, your words will be heard.
Your voice will sound like a spirit speaking from the underworld;
from the dust you will chirp as if muttering an incantation.
- 5 But the horde of invaders will be like fine dust,
the horde of tyrants like chaff that is blown away.
It will happen suddenly, in a flash.
- 6 Judgment will come from the LORD who commands armies,
accompanied by thunder, earthquake, and a loud noise,
by a strong gale, a windstorm, and a consuming flame of fire.
- 7 It will be like a dream, a night vision.
There will be a horde from all the nations that fight against Ariel,
those who attack her and her stronghold and besiege her.
- 8 It will be like a hungry man dreaming that he is eating,
only to awaken and find that his stomach is empty.
It will be like a thirsty man dreaming that he is drinking,
only to awaken and find that he is still weak and his thirst unquenched.
So it will be for the horde from all the nations
that fight against Mount Zion.

The Blindness of Prophets and People

- 9 You will be shocked and amazed!
You are totally blind!
They are drunk, but not because of wine;
they stagger, but not because of beer.
- 10 For the LORD has poured out on you
a strong urge to sleep deeply.
He has shut your eyes (the prophets),
and covered your heads (the seers). [[Rom 11:8](#)]

11 To you this entire prophetic revelation is like words in a sealed scroll. When they hand it to one who can read and say, “Read this,” he responds, “I can’t, because it is sealed.”

12 Or when they hand the scroll to one who can’t read and say, “Read this,” he says, “I can’t read.”

- 13 The sovereign master says,
“These people say they are loyal to me;
they say wonderful things about me,
but they are not really loyal to me.
Their worship consists of
nothing but man-made ritual. [[Matt 15:8–9](#); [Mark 7:6–7](#)]
- 14 Therefore I will again do an amazing thing for these people—

an absolutely extraordinary deed.
 Wise men will have nothing to say,
 the sages will have no explanations.” [1 Cor 1:19]

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

Isaiah 29:15–24

- 15 Those who try to hide their plans from the LORD are as good as dead,
 who do their work in secret and boast,
 “Who sees us? Who knows what we’re doing?”
- 16 Your thinking is perverse!
 Should the potter be regarded as clay?
 Should the thing made say about its maker, “He didn’t make me”?
 Or should the pottery say about the potter, “He doesn’t understand”? [Rom 9:20]
- 17 In just a very short time
 Lebanon will turn into an orchard,
 and the orchard will be considered a forest.
- 18 At that time the deaf will be able to hear words read from a scroll,
 and the eyes of the blind will be able to see through deep darkness. [Matt 11:5; Luke 7:22]
- 19 The downtrodden will again rejoice in the LORD;
 the poor among humankind will take delight in the Holy One of Israel.
- 20 For tyrants will disappear,
 those who taunt will vanish,
 and all those who love to do wrong will be eliminated—
- 21 those who bear false testimony against a person,
 who entrap the one who arbitrates at the city gate
 and deprive the innocent of justice by making false charges.
- 22 So this is what the LORD, the one who delivered Abraham, says to the family of Jacob:
 “Jacob will no longer be ashamed;
 their faces will no longer show their embarrassment.
- 23 For when they see their children,
 whom I will produce among them,
 they will honor my name.
 They will honor the Holy One of Jacob;
 they will respect the God of Israel.
- 24 Those who stray morally will gain understanding;
 those who complain will acquire insight.

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