

April 29, 2018

“A Precious Cornerstone”

Background Chapters: Isaiah 27-28 (NIV)

Lesson Passage: Isaiah 28:9-29

Cross References: Matthew 11:28-29; 21:42-44; Romans 9:30-33; 10:11-13; 1 Corinthians 14:20-21; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Lesson Idea: We should not ignore the word of the Lord, but build our lives on Jesus Christ as our cornerstone and foundation.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Apr 22 2 Kings 4-5	Apr 23 2 Kings 6-8
Apr 24 2 Kings 9-11	Apr 25 2 Kings 12-14
Apr 26 2 Kings 15-17	Apr 27 2 Kings 18-19
Apr 28 2 Kings 20-22	Apr 29 2 Kings 23-25

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- **The Word of the Lord is simple enough for children to understand, but it must be obeyed.**
- **Whatever else we trust in besides the Lord will be empty and deceitful.**
- **Jesus is the Cornerstone who is the strong foundation for life.**
- **God’s timing is perfect, even in judgment.**

NOTE: from David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*: Isaiah 28 begins an eight-chapter section (28-35) mostly directed to the southern kingdom of Judah. Since it is often most effective to address a sin present in a third party, and then apply it directly to the person, Isaiah will first speak of the sin of Israel, then switch the focus to Judah.

v 1. To the drunkards of Ephraim: In Ephraim (another name for the northern nation of Israel, because the tribe of Ephraim was a prominent tribe in that nation), drunkenness was a significant enough problem that the Lord directed Isaiah to directly address **the drunkards of Ephraim**.

Context:

Verses 1-10 address their pride and drunkenness, which was so prevalent that even their priests and prophets were drunkards. They mocked Isaiah’s simple and repetitive message; but they should have heeded it.

Isaiah 28:11-15

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;

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 our hiding place.”

DISCUSSION:

- v 9-10. These verses indicate how the drunken priests criticized Isaiah’s message. How did they mock his message as being childlike? How is God’s message simple?

NOTE: from Guzik:

Whom will he teach knowledge? These are the words of the drunk, ungodly prophets and priests described in Isaiah 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).

“Verses 9 and 10 portray the sarcastic reaction these Judean 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 monosyllables in verse 10 may mean that the Judean leaders regarded

Isaiah's message as meaningless or as child's play." (Wolf)

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."

- v 11. How does God say He will speak to His people? What are the *foreign lips and strange tongues* (NASB "stammering lips and a foreign tongue")? How does Paul refer to this passage in 1 Corinthians 14:20-21?

NOTE: from Guzik:

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.

- V 12. What did God want to give to His people? Why did He not give them rest? How do we miss out on the blessings of God by not listening to Him? (see Matthew 11:28-29)
- V 13. How will the rules of captivity teach them? How does God use tough times in our lives to teach us His will?
- V 14-15. Why would people try to take refuge in falsehood and deception? How do you try to hide from the Lord with falsehood or hypocrisy?

NOTE: from Guzik:

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.

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 has a significant interest in making the wicked feel that death is their friend.

Isaiah 28:16-22

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.

DISCUSSION:

- v 16. Why does God say He will lay a cornerstone in Zion? Who is that Cornerstone? Why will those who believe in it not be *disturbed*? How did Jesus apply this passage to Himself in Matthew 21:42-44? How does Paul apply it to Jesus in Romans 9:30-33 and 10:11-13?

NOTE: from Guzik:

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 foundation.

What is this foundation? 1 Peter 2:6 applies this passage directly to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the foundation for our lives, and only with a secure, stable foundation can anything lasting be built. Anything "added on" to the house, not built upon the foundation, is sure to end up in wreckage.

Who lays this stone? 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.

- V 17. How do *justice* and *righteousness* serve as a measuring line and level? How did God say He would remove their refuge of falsehood? Why can God always reach us even in our *secret place*?

NOTE: from Guzik:

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 (Isaiah 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.

- V 18-21. These verses describe the certainty of God's judgment. How did the Lord rise up *at Mount Perazim* and *in the valley of Gibeon*? (see 2 Samuel 5:20; Joshua 10:11)

NOTE: from Guzik:

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 for Israel in the days of David (2 Samuel 5:20). At **Gibeon,** the Lord accomplished a great victory for Israel in the days of Joshua (Joshua 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 work, or as the King James Version puts it, His strange work.

Now therefore, do not be mockers: The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize the danger of mocking God with their "deals with death" and haughty words against God.

- V 22. What command did the Lord give them? What would happen if they did not obey?

Isaiah 28:23-29

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,

barley in its plot,

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.

DISCUSSION:

- v 23. Why do we need to *listen and hear God's voice*?
- V 24-26. What can be learned from the farmer? How does God instruct him?
- V 27-29. What happens when grain is threshed too long? How does this remind the people that God will not allow His judgment to last too long?
- V 29. How do both judgment and blessing come from the Lord of hosts? Why is His plan wonderful and his wisdom magnificent? (see Romans 11:33)

NOTE: from Guzik:

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." (Wolf)

Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance: The phrase wonderful in counsel is the same words used to describe the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 (Wonderful Counselor). It reminds us of the perfect timing and wisdom of God's work in our lives.

APPLICATION:

- ✓ What is your feeling towards the Word of the Lord?
How obedient are you to its simple message?
- ✓ How is Jesus the cornerstone of your life?
- ✓ How do you allow God's righteousness and justice to measure your life?

Lesson by Bro Stan