

Isaiah 28:1-29

"A Determined Destruction"

Let's recall that at this point, the nation of Israel is divided into two kingdoms. Israel to the north, Judah to the south. Judah had the capital city of Jerusalem, so Israel declared *Samaria* to be its capital. The most prominent *tribe* of the northern kingdom was Ephraim. So, when the Lord *addresses* the northern kingdom, you may hear a reference to Israel, perhaps to Samaria, still other times to Ephraim. They all refer to the same place...

*Now, how many of you have discovered that *our sin* looks much worse on other people? Meaning, you tend to tolerate sin in your own life, but when you see that same sin is someone else's life, it just seems terrible. You lie about something; you give yourself grace. You catch someone else lying & you're ready to call for the judge, jury & hangman! Jesus addressed this syndrome when He said, *"...why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*¹ *

One day, Nathan (the prophet) comes to king David & says, "I have a story for you David." (Who doesn't like a story?) He said, "There was a poor man in your kingdom who owned 1 little lamb, & my how he loved that lamb. It ate from his plate, drank from his cup, it slept in the man's bed... it was like member of the family. **But it happened that a traveler passing through came across a rich man who had more flocks/livestock than he knew what to do with. But rather than provide for the stranger from his own flock, he took the 1 little lamb from the poor man, slaughtered it & used it to take care of the traveler.**"

David got all irate. "Who is this guy! Bring him here I'll have him put to death!" Nathan looks at the king & says, "David, *you're the man!*" & He began to speak to him of his sin w/Bathsheba, how she was all that Uriah had & how David took him, murdered him & tried to cover it up so he could have Uriah's wife for himself... **David said, "I have sinned!" Nathan said, "& God has put away your sin, you shall not die."** Once David saw his sin in someone else, he could see how ugly, how terrible & how reprehensible it was & it provoked in him a heart of repentance. *That's what God wants.*

Here in Ch 28, Isaiah begins by addressing the sin of Israel, but then he switches the focus to Judah, the desire being to bring forth the fruit of repentance.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Mt 7:3-5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 1-4

So as you can see, the Ch begins by addressing a sin situation in Israel that had gotten so bad, so out of control, that had brought them to such a place of decadence & degeneracy that God drew attention to it on a national level & that of course is the sin... of drunkenness.

& I know that we live in a culture that *loves* to glom on to the fact (& it is a fact) that the Bible doesn't strictly condemn drinking alcohol. But *alcoholism & drunkenness* it speaks to very clearly, & there is zero ambiguity about the fact that God fully condemns drunkenness. The Bible is clear that God wants you to be about the full spectrum of your senses. He wants your senses to be sharp & your ability to discern, to act & react at peak levels.

& You can just write these references down & look at them later. Proverbs 23:29-35, Rom 13:13, 1 Cor 5:11, 6:10 & 11:21, Gal 5:21 & 1 Pet 4:3 all contain commands & warnings against drunkenness. In fact, when you get to Luke's gospel, Jesus *specifically warns against* drunkenness in the last days. (How many of you have a sneaking suspicion that we're living in the last days?) Let's look at Luke's gospel together. Luke 21

Vs 34-36

* Isn't it interesting that of all the things Jesus could've warned us about concerning the last days (the time just before He returns) He chose to issue a warning about excessive drinking? Ladies & gentlemen, you & me, we need to be *sober* concerning the times to which the Lord has called us *to* & caused us to be alive *in*!

& I know that it's a global issue, but concerning the culture to which God called *us* to, our society pays a *terrible price* for drunkenness. Not only upon the individual, (when you see the toll that alcoholism takes upon the individual, the devastation & ruin that it works in their lives, it can be absolutely overwhelming). But it never stops w/the individual, the *extended* costs of alcoholism are *equally* as staggering! It dismantles families, it leads people to poverty, strips people of dignity & absolutely destroys their lives.

The latest research demonstrates that over 140,000 people per year die (in the U.S. alone) due to alcohol related causes. Over 10,000 people per yr are killed in drunk driving incidents (accounting for 30% of all traffic fatalities [1 about ever 45 minutes]).

The cost of excessive drinking upon the U.S. economy is nearly \$250 billion annually. Drunkenness is behind many violent crimes, & sexual crimes, or people who become victims of these crimes are often drunk. –

Studies estimate that between ½-3/4 of all sexual assaults involve alcohol consumption by either the victim or offender and many times by both. & In the upwards of 81% of all college rape situations involve alcohol be it by the perpetrator, the victim or both... What I'm seeking to draw attention to here is that drunkenness was a problem in Isaiah's day. But Ladies & gentlemen, it's a problem of epidemic proportions in your day as well! *

The people of Israel were wearing a crown of pride... They weren't praying, they were partying... & God tells them, "Your glorious beauty is a fading flower..." Again, drunkenness, alcoholism makes everything good & glorious & beautiful in your life... wilt & fade away. It'll take your family, your friends, your finances, your home... & leave you w/nothing.

* "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards, to those who are overcome w/wine." When alcohol overcomes you, you are in sin. When it impairs your senses; your thinking, your judgment, your reflexes, - you are overcome w/wine & that is sin. If we feel *compelled* to drink, or have difficulty *not* drinking, or are secretly *ashamed* of our drinking, we're overcome w/wine & it's sin.

This word, "overcome" in Vs 1, literally means, "to strike down" or "to hammer". It's the same word used in Judges 5:26 when Jael pounded a tent peg through the head of Sisera. When you get drunk, when you get "hammered", that's what you're doing to yourself. It's like running tent peg through your head, you're just gone. *

& As long as we're on the subject, * let me clarify something here about what Paul says in Eph 5. We read there where he wrote, "*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*"² There have been those who've read this Vs & to their own shame, interpreted it to mean that if you're filled w/the Holy Spirit it'll be kind of like being drunk. They call it being "drunk in the Spirit" & it couldn't be farther from what Paul was talking about. What an insult to the Spirit of God! Paul wasn't *comparing* the 2, he was *contrasting* the 2. Alcohol is a *depressant*, it depresses your senses, you're sluggish, unable to think straight, walk straight or even talk straight! The Holy Spirit is a *stimulant*! He heightens your senses, you think soberly, speak clearly, act appropriately. The fruit of the Spirit is *self-control*! *

Now, when it comes to sin in a person's life. God generally ascribes to 1 of 2 courses of action depending on how the person responds to the instruction of His word.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Eph 5:18-19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Deliverance, or discipline (leading at times even to destruction). God says, “I have a mighty & a strong one, like a tempest of hail & a destroying storm who will bring down the proud... who will eat them up excitedly & w/a ferocity.” He was speaking of the Assyrian army who would invade them, have no mercy upon them & level them to the ground.

Vs 5-6

The flower of Ephraim will fade but the beauty & the glory of the Lord will remain for the remnant of His people... Couple things here quickly. #1 God *always has His remnant*, those few who will remain faithful to Him regardless of how dark or decadent the days may become. God was going to dole out judgment, but there would remain a remnant... & to them God would become more *central* to their lives, a greater *glory* to their lives than ever before.

* God has a way of removing the dross from our lives. So that He has His rightful place. Think about what you “glory” in. What has the greatest value to you (a “diadem of beauty” if you will)? Sometimes we glory in our accomplishments, we feel a sense of value when people “ooh” & “aah” over what we’ve done. **Sometimes it’s people we know, we like to drop a name here & there because it makes us feel important to be associated w/certain people... God would have us to derive that sense of “importance” (if you’ll allow me), of value, from the fact that we know Him.** We read in Jeremiah Ch 9, **“Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”³ ***

& As for Vs 6, you might just write down, “God’s calling is God’s equipping” or “If God enlists you, He will enable you.” **If He called them to sit in judgment (make decisions on His behalf) He would equip them w/a spirit of justice. To those who he called to the battle, He would give them strength. God will never call you where He doesn’t 1st equip you. The enemy will always offer “push back” to the servant of God. But greater is He who is in you, than He who is in the world. He will give you strength.**

Btw, we might see that embedded w/in that principle is the fact that in & of ourselves we don’t have the strength necessary to “turn back the battle at the gate”. Jesus said, “Apart from Me, you can do nothing.”

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Je 9:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We're to be strong *in the Lord*, & in the power of *His might*. (Write it down, read it later, Isa 40:28-31). –

At this point, you might envision the people, the prophets & priests of Judah thinking, "Yeah, go get em' Isaiah, you tell em!" (Remember that, "My sin looks real bad on you" principle in play)?

Vs 7-8

Because of the mention of the priest & the prophet (& the listing of the same sins) we draw the conclusion that this is where Isaiah turns the tables on the nation of Judah. He's saying, "Hey, I notice you can see that proverbial speck in your brother's eye real good! Why aren't you just as eager to deal w/the 4x4 post in your own eye?"

Here they are, perhaps rejoicing that judgment is coming to their rival kingdom due to their degeneracy, immorality & depravity. But Isaiah says, "Don't deceive yourselves & think judgment won't find *you!* You're guilty of the same things!"

As priests & prophets, they were set in place to be examples to the people. Yet they're staggering drunk around the city. Notice, "they are swallowed up by wine. They are out of the way through intoxicating drink." Out of what way? The way of *wisdom*. **The idea is that they're no longer walking in God's way, honoring God's Word, or God's will. Their counsel to the people wasn't flowing from the Spirit of God, they were just speaking from their own drunken delusions, "They err in vision & stumble in judgment." Alcohol can get you off track w/God, impairing your judgment, your ability to discern/distinguish between holy & unholy, clean & unclean (right & wrong). It blurs the line & that's not good.**

Now, in Vs 9-10 we have the mocking response of the drunken prophets/priests as they ridicule Isaiah's message rather than repent of their sins...

Vs 9-10

They're mocking the simplicity of the man of God's message! "This guy talks to us like we're toddlers, as if we were just weaned from the breast! Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little! Who do you think we are!?" Ladies & gentlemen this isn't the response of a people who are *receiving* the message, they're *rejecting* the message. They're telling Isaiah his message may be ok for C.M. but he's out his league w/*them*... They're too *spiritually sophisticated* for him.

Imagine there you are, a little midwestern, Podunk kinda person. & You go to deliver a message from God to the ivy league elites of our day.

They've got master's degrees in theology, doctorates in divinity, they speak Greek/Hebrew. They're real *intelligentsia!* 😊 & Here you are, you've never even been to bible school, you live in a small town... & You presume to give *them* a message from God...

These guys are dogging Isaiah, making light of the simple nature of His message... & This happens today, people can be so intoxicated through intellectual pride that they mock the simple message of the gospel given by a humble witness.

But the truth is, that in their mocking of Isaiah, they actually pay him a great compliment. * I'm telling ya, it's a wonderful thing to be presented the truth of God's word, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little. Properly presented, God's word will feed the new believer & the seasoned saint together. God loves His word presented so simply that there's no excuses, everyone understands & has to make a choice in how they're going to respond to it. *

These guys have responded by rejecting it. So Isaiah tells them, "Well, if you won't respond to the simple/straightforward message of the word of God in your own language, God will get your attention & speak to you in a language you don't understand.

Vs 11-13

Vs 13 is a reference to the Assyrian army, later on the Babylonian army. The essence is, "If you don't want simple speech that you *can* understand, I'll give you stammering lips & another tongue which you *can't* understand." If they wouldn't learn through the word, they'd be forced to learn through war.

Can I just tell you that you don't want to find yourself in a place whereby you're fighting against God? It's a war you cannot win... If we reject the simple, straightforward message of God's word, He's more than capable of finding other ways to "communicate" to the hard-hearted & obstinate.

God offered them rest, times of refreshing, they would receive it through repentance! Write it down, * repentance leads to times of refreshing. It's the principle that Peter presented in Acts Ch 3, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."⁴ God wants to give us rest, but if what you want is *war*... then just refuse to listen. "Yet they would not hear." Listen, ultimately, God's work against sin is that of deliverance or destruction. We decide which end we're going to be on based upon repentance or rebellion & rejection of God's Word.

⁴ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Ac 3:19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But let's not blame God when *we will not hear*, when *we won't respond in repentance*. The word of the Lord is given... "Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little..." Again, this is the right way to give out God's word. – He doesn't say, "Topic by topic" (not that a topical doesn't have its place). The idea here is that we need *all* of it, don't skip even a single line. Give it out simply & straightforward. It's how we grow. You're not going to get all your answers through a 2 week shotgun course on life. It's the slow, steady grind of getting into God's word & allowing God's word to get into us. *

It creates accountability before God. They heard it, didn't respond in repentance to it, therefore they fell backward, were broken, snared & caught. Listen, when the message is so simple that even a child can understand it, yet one goes on to reject it & mock it, that doesn't wind up well for them, it results in destruction & judgment.

Vs 14-15

God calls the leaders of Judah, "scornful" men. Thinking more highly of themselves than they ought. They considered themselves too mature, or too advanced for the word of the Lord to be given to them precept upon precept, line upon line.

They were confident that they had nothing to worry about, they weren't concerned w/the threat of death because they'd made political agreements & alliances. They were confident that the "scourge" (the whip) of God's judgment & correction wouldn't really come against them.

* But God told them, "You're trusting in lies, you're taking cover under falsehood." & This is what people do who won't believe God's word. If you won't believe the truth you have to take refuge in the lie... People believe the lie, "I'm a pretty good person, I think God will let me into heaven on my own merit." Or that they can have a saved soul w/no evidence of a changed life. Or that things were so great at some point in their lives previously so they coast on that though things are completely the opposite presently. They've hidden themselves under falsehood (it's a house of cards, a house built on the sand).*

Vs 16-19

* Let me say it simply. Don't anchor yourself to lies, tether yourself to & build upon the sure foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone. & We know that this finds its fulfillment in J.C. (1 Pet 2:6). He is the sure foundation upon which we build our lives. & Notice that God is the One who lays the foundation, we can't provide an adequate footing or foundation for our lives, that's God work & He accomplishes it through Christ. & We note that the one who builds their life on & is anchored to Christ won't act hastily.

Meaning you're not in a panic, no need to rush here & there in anxiety, you're able to face adversity w/a peace that passes understanding because your life is established on the Rock. God keeps it "in line" through justice & righteousness. *

If you're building upon lies/falsehood, then when the "storms" come, the hail will sweep it away & the waters will overflow & overwhelm it. (This is where you write down Matt 7:24-27). God says this is what they've done therefore they would be destroyed (unable to stand). He's annulling their "covenant w/death".

Again, the only way to avoid the determined destruction of God's judgment is to be found in, & built upon the Rock (which is J.C.). Any other plan will be washed away, it's taking refuge in a lie.

Vs 20-22

They've made their bed through ungodly agreements & alliances & God's going to let them lie in it, but the bed is too short & the covers are too narrow. They're "short-sheeting" themselves! It's a miserable experience, the bed is too short & the covers don't really cover you at all!

What's the application? True rest is only found in J.C.! Any other "bed", "refuge" or "place of rest" is too short, it won't suffice! A rejection of God will give you no rest, no peace, no security, no warmth & no comfort. Don't go after the short beds & narrow coverings of the world! There's rest for your soul in Christ alone.

The "unusual act" is that of disciplining His people by means of an ungodly nation. "Now", Isaiah says, "Don't be mockers lest your bonds be made strong." God will not be mocked. If you scoff & mock, it'll only make matters worse.

Vs 23-29

* Vs 23. God says, "Listen & pay attention to My words." (Great advice btw). He says, "Consider the farmer, does he just plow & plow & never sow? Or does he plow, then level the soil, then plant the seed? When he plants the seed, does he scatter it all together or does he take pains to recognize what he's working with & give each kind of seed the attention it needs using different tools at different times to bring about the desired result?" ... God says, "He knows how to use each tool, for each kind of seed because I've given him right judgment." Close

Let me get to the point. God is saying that He's like a wise farmer. He knows what tools to use *in* our lives at the right times & seasons *of* our lives to bring forth fruit *in* our lives. He doesn't plow forever, after the soil is prepared, He sows, He plants, He waters...

& Even when the harvest comes, the threshing process varies. God won't discipline us beyond what's necessary. We can trust Him to be as wise as a good farmer! 😊 He knows what season you're in. Perhaps you're in a season of preparation, or sowing, watering, harvesting... or threshing. But God knows what He's doing.

He's wonderful in counsel & excellent in guidance. You can trust His perfect timing & the wisdom of His work in your life. *

Prayer Points:

Thank You God that You know us, that You administer perfect wisdom in the way You work in/through us. We trust You. May we not think more highly of ourselves than we ought, but rather that we remain humble before You, pliable, teachable & that we honor Your word. We thank You for Your wonderful counsel & excellent guidance.

Trusting in lies or anchored to the Rock? The refuge of lies will not serve to save you. Build your life upon the Lord J.C. Believe in Him & be saved.