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Isaiah 28.

(2015)

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Isaiah 28.

Topics.

- The proud crown of Ephraim and the fading flower of its glorious beauty.
- The glory of Ephraim will be like ripe figs being eaten before summer.
- God will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to His people.
- Who will the LORD explain the message? To those weaned from the milk.
- Precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line.
- By people of strange and foreign lips the LORD will speak to this people.
- We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol it will not come to us.
- A foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone.
- I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line.
- Israel's covenant of death and agreement with Sheol will be annulled.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw

the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ.

Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

The Proud Crown of Ephraim and the Fading Flower of its Glorious Beauty.

Isaiah 28:1 ----- ¹ Ah, the proud crown (woe to the crown of pride in KJV) of the drunkards of Ephraim and the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine!

The focus of Isaiah's prophetic vision from chapter twenty-four through to chapter twenty-seven inclusive have been a continuous prophecy of the overthrow of Babylon during the days of Nebuchadnezzar its king and in their widest sense the overthrow of the great world-powers which arrayed themselves against God and His people, the focus of the vision now shifts to Ephraim.

Ephraim: means double fruit. Asenath the Egyptian daughter of Potiphera the priest of On bore Ephraim to Joseph. He was the younger of two sons of Joseph and his Egyptian wife (Gen. 41:50-52).

The blessing: when Joseph took Ephraim and Manasseh to be blessed by his aged father Jacob just prior to his death Jacob put his right hand (signifying the preferential blessing) on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh the firstborn and by doing so put Ephraim the younger before Manasseh the firstborn.

Jacob told Joseph that Manasseh will become a great people, but his younger brother Ephraim will be greater than Manasseh and Ephraim's offspring will become a multitude of nations. (Genesis 48:1-22) (Genesis 49:22-26).

The territory: Ephraim's territory was north of the Dead Sea in Samaria Palestine it included two worship centers each with a golden calf one was at Bethel and the other at Shiloh.

The tribes: Ephraim was the progenitor of the tribe called by his name, as was also Manasseh. This brought the number of the Hebrew tribes to thirteen, but Joseph continued to be counted as one tribe so the original number twelve (derived from the twelve sons of Jacob) continued to be referred to as twelve

tribes. The separation of the tribe of Levi from the other tribes for the service of the Tabernacle and the fact Levi's did not receive a separate territory in which to live (because the LORD was their inheritance) also helped to perpetuate the concept of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The split: when Jeroboam 1, an Ephraimite (1 Kings 11:26) rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam, Ephraim became such a great leader in the new northern kingdom that in addition to its more common name Israel, the kingdom also became referred to as Ephraim (Isaiah 7:2, 5, 9, 17) (Hosea 9:3-16). From this time on Ephraim's history is merged with that of this kingdom. Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in the midst of Ephraim, but were made servants of Israel. (Joshua 16:10).

The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim: (v1) (woe to the crown of pride in KJV), a crown means that there is a king and a king means that there is a kingdom which also means that the expression, the proud crown, could be stated in the following way, the proud king, or the proud kingdom or the proud nation. The once faithful and godly heads of Ephraim (religious leaders, priests and prophets) became so worldly that they partied and drank so much alcohol that they could not even walk straight.

This shows how far the ten tribes of Israel had fallen. No faithful Christian church today would tolerate such worldly behavior from their ministers and elders, yet the people of Israel not only listened to the heads of their nation and religion, but also set their hearts diamond hard against God's true and faithful prophets because they didn't like what they said.

The proud crown: (v1) can rightly be stated, the proud king and may embrace the pride of the entire royal house. Their pride could stem from any or all of the following: -

- The kingdom was superior in numbers to the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin).
- Their royal and capital city Samaria was a great city.
- The king ruled over a very large country and a great number of people.
- They were able to drink greater amounts of strong wine than others.
- Their wealth, riches and their very fruitful lands especially their vineyards.

Woe to the fading flower of its glorious beauty: (v1) the word, "woe," is used to signify approaching judgment grief and sorrow. Some commentators liken the fading flower to the blossomed rose-buds on the crown of wreath or the chaplet of flowers worn on the head before the flowers wither, but this cannot be so since ancient Greece is the earliest examples of wreaths being worn on the head. The Assyria and Babylon knew nothing of these wreaths. It is better understood as referring to the flowers found in the fertile valleys of the land of Samaria the dwelling place of the ten tribes of Israel.

The head of the rich valley: (v1) refers to Samaria the royal and capitol city of Ephraim. It was built on a hill that rises to a height equal to any of the adjoining mountains and was surrounded with rich fertile fruitful valleys planted with grain, fig trees, olive trees, corn and vineyards which covered the valleys and looked to the eye very beautiful and glorious especially at harvest time.

Woe to the fading flower of its glorious beauty: (v1) refers to the glory of the royal city and the beauty of its fertile and fruitful land. The allusion is to the glory of the kingdom of Ephraim slowly coming to ruin as a flower over time withers and fades away.

The symbolism is very apt since the valleys and hills of Samaria were very fertile and would have been covered with all sorts of flourishing flowers and budding plants. Isaiah is prophesying that in the same way that a beautiful flower slowly withers over time likewise the kingdom of Samaria will slowly come to ruin and waste.

This is exactly what happened, over a number of years Assyria made a series of attacks against Israel in the land of Samaria until their final destruction came upon the kingdom when Shalmaneser the Assyrian king carried the ten tribes into captivity.

- Against Hoshea king of Israel came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria. And Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute. ⁴But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. ⁵Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it. ⁶In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:3-6).

After this horrific event takes place it will be right and proper to say that, “the royal glory of Ephraim, the greatness of Samaria and its fruitful land withered and perished as the beauty of a flower withers and fades.

Woe to those overcome with wine: (Isaiah 27v1) Isaiah words are aflame with loathing he speaks with fiery indignation as he looks upon the moral corruption of the Northern kingdom. He fixes his focus on drunkenness and partying which is one of the most common vices of all generations.

This is not to imply that this was their only sin, but to highlight the rottenness underlying the glory of the royal city and the corruption amongst its leaders which was partly veiled to the common folk by the surrounding visible beauty of Samaria’s hills and valleys.

Having many vineyards throughout the fertile valleys of Samaria the Ephraimites were exposed to drinking an excess of alcohol and were therefore frequently overcome by it, but this is no excuse. God does not ban things that can do great harm if taken in excess, but be enjoyed if taken in moderation rather He expects His people to have self-control (one of the fruits of the Spirit). Drunkenness highlights the truth that they lived to gratify the flesh and their sensual lusts and not to serve God.

Symbolically speaking: it could be said that they were drunk with proud self-confidence and power, glory and fame and drunk with their great affluence and riches, and since they had a golden calf set up in Dan and one in Bethel and pagan groves and altars built in the high places throughout their land it could also be said that they were drunk with idolatry.

NOTE.

It is not a sin to drink alcohol, the Bible does not teach total abstinence, nor does it teach that drinking alcohol is a sin, but it does strongly warn against drinking an excess of alcohol many times for the following reasons: -

- It weakens the will and can lead to a lack of moral fortitude.
- It can be dangerous since it often leads to self-indulgence, immorality, shamelessness and violence and drunken driving.
- It has the potential to lead to alcoholic addiction and destroy marriages and lives.
- It results in behavior that is often regretted when the drunken state of the mind sobers up and returns to normality.

Clearly excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to many sins, even the secular world understands this truth and that drunkenness can result in behavior that is often regretted the next day. For this reason it is obviously better to abstain altogether, nevertheless those who do drink in moderation cannot be accused of committing any sin.

The LORD has One who is Mighty; like a Destroying Tempest of Hail.

Isaiah 28:2-3 ----- ²Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand. ³The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden underfoot.

The mighty and strong one: refers to the kings of the Assyrian armies specifically Shalmaneser the king of Assyria who for three years besieged the land of Samaria then invaded it and took the Israelites away captive to Assyria. (2 Kings 17:3-6). In this vision Isaiah sees this battle pass before his eyes or in his mind in such vivid brutality and destruction he likens the armies of Assyria to a mighty destroying storm of hail that is so great it overflows all waters, signifying that the fierce armies and warriors of Assyria will be so vast that they will flood the entire land of Samaria and overflow into the land of Judah.

He casts down to the earth with his hand: (v2) refers to the LORD using the king of Assyria and his armies to bring the land of Samaria to ruin and waste. God uses secular nations, kings and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. He not only used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:1-9) to bring judgment on Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding nations (Jeremiah chapter 49, 50, 51, 52), but also used him to bring His judgment on Tyre and even gave him the wealth, riches and spoil of Egypt and their horses and chariots for wages because his armies laboured hard against Tyre and they worked for Him. (Ezek. 26:7) (Ezek. 29:18-20).

The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim: (v3) the heads of the royal house in their costly garments of royalty were puffed up in pride and the priests no doubt considered themselves superior to those they were appointed heads over. Yet behind closed doors they partied and drank until they were so drunk they could not walk without wobbling and staggering. This is why the LORD is casting His hand of judgment down upon them. Instead of being a good testimony and witness to the people of God they were not only leading them away from God, but leading the entire nation of Ephraim to destruction.

The Glory of Ephraim will be Like Ripe Figs Being Eaten before Summer.

Isaiah 28:4 ----- ⁴and the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley, will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer: when someone sees it, he swallows it as soon as it is in his hand.

The head of the rich valley refers to Samaria the capitol city of Ephraim it was built on a hill surrounded with fertile valleys rich with fruitful crops, orchards, olive trees and vineyards. Here Samaria is likened to a flourishing flower that is withering this is an apt image of Samaria since it was a most prosperous land, but in the same way that the beauty of a flower withers so too will the glory of Ephraim. Likewise in the same way that fruit is given a space of time to grow and then is eaten and swallowed as soon as it is ripe, the flourishing glory and beauty of Samaria like ripe fruit will be (at the appointed time) overthrown and swallowed up by their enemy (specifically Assyria).

God will be a Crown of Glory, and a Diadem of Beauty, to his People.

Isaiah 28:5-6 ----- ⁵In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant (residue in KJV) of his people, ⁶and a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

In that day: (v5) commences a new subject it refers to that period of time after the kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) have been utterly laid waste and the people taken captive to Assyria. The following verses show that this occurred in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign: -

- In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. (2 Kings 18:10).

It was at this time and during the reign of Josiah that the first part of this prophecy had its fulfilment. Now at the words "that day" the vision turns from the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom to the two tribes of the Southern Kingdom i.e., (Judah and Benjamin) who Isaiah refers to as the remnant (residue in KJV), of God's people. He gives to them a favourable prediction that they would continue as a kingdom in their own country after the final captivity of the Israelites (which was fulfilled during the reign of Hezekiah and Josiah), but the prophecy soon changes to reproofs and threatening, because of Judah's rebellion, disobedience, and idolatry.

The following verses show that Shal-maneser the Assyrian king laid the land of Israel waste and took the survivors of the ten tribes captive: -

- In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shal-maneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, ¹⁰and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ¹¹The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria. (2 Kings 18:9-11).

The following verses show that after Israel had been taken captive Sennacherib king of Assyria entered the land of Judah and destroyed all their cities: -

- In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (2 Kings 18:13).

After destroying Judah's cities Sennacherib then came up against the walls of Jerusalem to take it, but could not: -

- Thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria (Sennacherib): He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." ³⁵And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. (2 Kings 19:321-36)

The crown of glory: (v5) is a very striking and beautiful contrast to the crown of pride. In contrast to the fading and withering crown of pride and the perishing crown of the senses and worldly life the crown of glory, is a crown of immortality and the joys of communion with God. It is a crown of God's surrounding protection, presence and boundless measures of grace and of eternal life and everlasting happiness. Those whose glory is in this crown will find joy now and in the new immortal life everlasting happiness.

There will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty: (v5) in stark contrast to the fading crown of the glory of Samaria the capital city of the ten tribes of Israel, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained in their own land and God favoured and protected them during the reign of Hezekiah and Josiah kings of Judah especially when the mighty Assyrian armies came up against the city of Jerusalem. It is certain that Assyria's vast and mighty armies would have taken the city had God not sent an angel to their camp to slay 185,000 soldiers. (2 Kings 19:35).

A diadem of beauty: when God's people set aside their love for worldly riches and material possessions then God Himself will be a diadem of beauty to them. The faithful who do not put their trust in worldly riches and wealth, but make God their glory and trust will be preserved and granted the true crown and diadem of God which is His love, favour and grace that leads to eternal life and everlasting happiness.

A spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment: (v6) in contrast to the kings of Israel who perverted and twisted justice for their own gain, God would give those who rule in Judah a heart of integrity to administer honest justice to the people they ruled over.

This was partially fulfilled during the reign of Hezekiah and Josiah, but will be completely and fully fulfilled during the reign of the true King the Lord Jesus Christ.

To them that turn back the battle at the gate: (v6) this is exactly what happened, Sennacherib king of Assyria after defiantly mocking and scorning the LORD God of Israel (2 Kings 19:16) came up to the gates of Jerusalem with chariots, horsemen and fierce warriors, far greater in numbers than men of war remaining in Jerusalem yet he and his armies could not enter the gates of the city, but turned back to their own land, because an angel of the LORD slayed 185,000 of their warriors while they were camping against Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35).

The priest and Prophet in Vision and Judgment Stagger with Strong Drink.

Isaiah 28:7-8 ----- ⁷These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed by wine, they stagger with strong drink, they reel in vision, they stumble in giving judgment. ⁸For all tables are full of filthy vomit, with no space left.

The focus of the vision has now surpassed the reign of Hezekiah and Josiah and is now upon the decline of the people of Judah. Isaiah see in this vision that is passing before his eyes or in his mind the inhabitants of Jerusalem entertaining the same debauchery and sins as the ten tribe of Israel where. His language is intense in its loathing as he looks upon the wickedness of those who were called to be the guides of the LORD'S people.

The words reel and stagger and a the words wine and strong drink are repeated, this is to magnify the utter disgust the LORD has toward these priests' and prophets who are not only unsteady on their feet, but actually stumble and fall, because of the extreme amount of alcohol they have consumed during their revelling's.

They are pictured as lying unconscious in piles of deep vomit. This very graphic language highlights the utter disdain God has toward them. This is men that were privileged with the call to serve the living God and be guides to His people, but instead of being shining lights to those they minister to they are leading them to corruption and destruction.

It is certain that some of these drunken priests and false prophets in Jerusalem thought Isaiah was being extremely ill-mannered and offensive, by speaking about staggering teachers and tables swimming in vomit, but so deep was the corruption that Isaiah had to speak out as he looked upon: -

- Officials who were tipsy even when engaged in their official duties.
- Prophets who reeled while they were seeing visions.
- Judges who could not sit upright even when pronouncing judgment.

Who will the LORD explain the Message? To those Weaned from the Milk.

Isaiah 28:9 ----- ⁹"To whom will he (the LORD) (v11) teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast?

It is babies who are weaned from the breast so the expression refers to very young children. The idea carried is that the leaders of Judah were like little children and any attempt to teach them the word of God would be vain and utterly pointless especially since they like a rebellious child would take no notice. It would be like a faithful prophet standing before young children and teaching them the mysteries of God.

Isaiah is saying that he may as well take children just weaned from the breast and instruct them, as to make any effort to teach these people the knowledge of God's purposes and of the looming judgment that God will bring upon their city, because there was no one that was willing to hear what he had to say since all were without wisdom and by their corrupt and drunken behaviour unfit for such learning as young babies would be.

Some commentators take the expression, "Those who are weaned from milk," to be spoken by the drunken priests and prophets as an expression of contempt. They teach that it carries the following idea, "Who does God take us to be? Does he regard us as mere babies? Does he deal with us as we deal with infants just weaned from milk forever repeating to us the same basic and fundamental lessons of knowledge?"

They teach it to mean that the drunkards are scoffing at Isaiah's warnings saying: "Who does Isaiah think he is to presume to teach us knowledge, does he take us to be simple children and ignorant babies?"

Though at some level it maybe taken this way in the scope of the whole conversation it better fits the following scenario, not that the drunken priest and prophets were speaking against Isaiah, but that Isaiah was saying that they were unfit for teaching knowledge as young children weaned from the breast would be.

The idea here is that the minds of the prophets and priests of Judah during Isaiah's generation were so impaired and reprobate (degenerated) by excessive drinking and corrupt behaviour that they were unable to take in the knowledge concerning the ways and purposes of God as a one or two year old child would be.

Overview: as Isaiah looks upon the corrupt stumbling priests and prophets that distort and twist judgment for their own gain and instead of explaining the message of God to the people are fully consumed with gratifying their flesh, he asks the question, "To, who will the LORD explain the message?" And then answers his own question by saying, "To those who are weaned from the milk," meaning to those of the next generations.

Isaiah's generation has turned so far away from what God intended for them that they have set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's faithful prophets and by doing so have made themselves unteachable.

Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line.

Isaiah 28:10 ----- 10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."

This expression carries the following ideas: -

- One book after another, as young children are taught to read.
- One judgment after another until they learn
- One rule and one law after another until they not only learn them, but actually do them.
- One trial after another until they believe the Lord Jesus Christ is there Messiah and King and the one the Scriptures and prophets proclaimed was to come.
- One message after another until they believe the message of salvation and the Gospel of grace.

It carries the idea that Israel was so spiritually blind by their corrupt behaviour and drunkenness in the knowledge of God that they could only be taught line by line meaning in small doses over a long period of time. Because of their rebellion and great dullness of mind they needed to be spoken to in the language of children, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

Bit by bit, with gradual steps, with continual persistence, like the slow drops on the rock, the message of God's love, grace and salvation which was distained by the priests and prophets of Judah when it came by the prophet's will be heard in the future generations. The principle embodied in these verses is as true today as it was in the day it was spoken. To follow Christ we have to set our heart upon him and not upon worldly riches and the indulgent cravings of the flesh as the priest's and prophets of Judah did.

By People of Strange and Foreign Lips the LORD will speak to this People.

Isaiah 28:11-13 ----- ¹¹For by people of strange lips (stammering lips in KJV) and with a foreign tongue the LORD will speak to this people, ¹²to whom he has said, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose" (refreshing in KJV); yet they would not hear. ¹³And the word of the LORD will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

The word stammering comes from the Hebrew word (*la`eg*) it literally means, a buffoon and can refer to a person who mocks and to a foreigner. It carries the idea of not being able to understand the language being spoken. The stammering lips are those of the Assyrian conquerors whose sharp commands and language would be to the people who would not listen to the prophet's teaching as a barbarous speech.

The description of the stammering tongue re-appears in the following verses: -

- You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand. (Isaiah 33:19).
- The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand. (Deuteronomy. 28:49).

Stammering tongues in this context refers to insolent people that are enemies of Israel that speak a different language to the Hebrew language, thus the expression, "other tongues."

- In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues (other tongues in KJV) and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:21).

In this verse the stammering tongues refer to the Gentiles from various nations praising God before the Jews. Which means that the strange and stammering lips and foreign tongues at the time of this prophecy of Isaiah refers the speech of their barbarian conquerors the Assyrians and Babylonian who took them into captivity and who spoke a language other than Hebrew which of course was obviously a foreign language to that which the people of Israel spoke.

God is saying that because His people refused to heed the messages which He sent to them through the prophets He will teach them by removing them from their land and to a distant land, and after living amongst strangers speaking a foreign language they would learn the lesson which they refused to learn by the prophets that spoke in their own land and in their own language.

God will no longer teach them by the words of the prophets but by severe and harsh lessons brought about by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

- Behold, I am bringing against you (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) a nation from afar, O house of Israel, declares the LORD. It is an enduring nation; it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know, nor can you understand what they say. (Jeremiah 5:15).

Language was a major focus during the ancient generations it separated nations (it still does). It was a great humiliation for the people of Israel to be conquered and taken captive to into a nation that spoke a foreign language.

The general mindset of the Jews of old was that they were the holy race with God and all other nations (Gentiles) were unclean nations without God.

- You (those who walk and speaks righteously) will see no more the insolent people (fierce people in KJV) the people of an obscure speech (deeper speech in KJV) that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand. (Isaiah 33:19).

Here a stammering tongue refers to a proper language, but one that those who have not learned it do not understand which means that the expression “a stammering tongue,” refers to a foreign language.

- Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah (men of Judah) said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic (the Syrian language in KJV), for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall (of the city of Jerusalem). (Isaiah 36:11).

It is most likely that Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah did not want the people of Jerusalem to understand what the Rabshakeh was saying because he was deifying and mocking the God of Israel on the king of Assyria's behalf and may have instilled fear into those standing on the wall of Jerusalem.

- The LORD said to me (Ezekiel), "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. ⁵For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech (a strange speech in KJV) and a hard language, but to the house of Israel— ⁶not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. ⁷But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me. (Ezek. 3:4-5).

Here the language of other nations (i.e., Gentile nations) is referred to as being a foreign speech, a strange speech and a hard language, not because it is unintelligible, but because the people of Israel had not learned it and therefore did not understand it. Based upon these verses the expression, “stammering lips,” carries the following two ideas: -

1. The speaker sounds as though they are stammering (or stuttering) to the listener because those listening do not understand the language.
2. It is the fierce enemy who is doing the speaking therefore the speaking will mostly be harsh and brutal commands that their victims do not understand which magnifies the idea of them speaking stammering words (i.e., fearful words).

Here is the foolishness of Israel, had they listened to the prophets God sent them and heeded their message they would have avoided all the suffering and humiliations that Isaiah is warning them will come upon them. While dwelling in these barbarous distant lands of foreigners that they do not understand they will be continually humiliated. Had they heeded the words of their prophets and repented turned from their wicked ways and destroyed their altars to pagan gods and worshipped the LORD their God only they would have avoided all the terror that is about to come upon them.

This was fulfilled during the days of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylonian. God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them.

But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14)

The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.).

Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods.

They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years. During this period of time and through struggling hardships they learned line upon line precept upon precept the word and ways of God. They not only turned to the LORD their God with all their heart and forsook all pagan idols and gods, but also united together as one nation with one faith and one God.

However though the seventy year captivity came to a glorious end the principal of teaching line upon line, precept upon precept did not, this is a principal that is to continue from generation to generation through to the birth of Jesus, to the Gospel of grace and continue on until that glorious day the Lord returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself.

We have made a Covenant with Death, and with Sheol it will Not come to Us.

Isaiah 28:14-15 ----- ¹⁴Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem!

¹⁵Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip (the overflowing scourge in KJV) passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter."

Isaiah sets his focus on the rulers of Jerusalem, he refers to them as scoffers, because rather than heed the words of the LORD Isaiah was speaking to them, they in their puffed up pride looked down upon him with disdain and as an inferior or lesser man of God than they were. Their pride was such that they believed they were the head of the tree, the top dogs, the cream of the bunch and everyone else was beneath them in knowledge and wisdom, such was their arrogance and stupidity.

We have made a covenant with death: (v15) does not mean that they actually spoke verbally with death and made some kind of covenant with it, but that they wrongly believed that the covenants they had made with stronger secular nations would protect them from their enemies and that the covenants they had made with their enemies that they would not invade them would secure their safety and in this way they would be protected from death and secure from the grave. It is expressive of their lack of fear of God's judgments that Isaiah warned them was coming if they did not heed his message. Rather than trust in what Isaiah was saying they put their confidence and assurance that they should not be hurt by death in the covenants they had made with pagan nations which the law of Moses forbid them to do.

The people had not formally said that they had made a covenant with death, but by their disrespectful attitude toward Isaiah and their lack of fear that any trouble would come near them it was as if they had said it. Even though their lifestyle was blatantly offensive to God they lived with a sense of security and a lack of fear that it appeared as though they had made a covenant with death not to come near them.

Though Isaiah is speaking to the rulers of Jerusalem their attitude and extraordinary stupidity is descriptive of the great mass of the nation at that time. They are as little anxious about death as if they had made a contract with death. They were not moved by his appeals and warnings of God's judgments and continued about their life as though death would never come near them.

We have made a covenant with death: (v15) can refer to any or all of the following covenants: -

- The covenant and agreement Ephraim (the ten tribes of Israel) in the land of Samaria made with their deadly enemies such as Sennacherib king of Assyria, with who they had made peace, and had entered into a covenant agreement and alliance, and therefore believed they had nothing to fear concerning the warnings of the LORD by Isaiah the prophet.
- The covenant and agreement Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem made with the Assyrian king that he would not destroy them or the city of Jerusalem when his army passed through their land as they march toward Egypt.

- The covenant and agreement of peace the Jews made with the Romans that the Jewish rulers were careful to observe and thereby believed themselves to be safe on account of it.
- Any other covenant and agreement the people of Israel and Judah made with pagan nations that lulled them into a false sense of security both physically and spiritually.

When the overwhelming whip: (v15) (the overflowing scourge in KJV) the word scourge and whip carry the idea of an oppressor and a tormentor it can refer to any punishment or catastrophe. In this context it refers to God's severe judgments and the calamities inundating the people of Judah as the waters of a river overflow its banks. It most likely refers to the Assyrian invasions spoken of in the following verses: -

- Behold, the LORD is bringing up against them (the ten tribes in Samaria and Damascus) the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, ⁸and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel." (Isaiah 8:7-8).
- Thus says the LORD God of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. (Isaiah 10:24)
- Behold, the LORD has one (the king of the Assyria) who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand. (Isaiah 28:2) (see v2) (above).

The hostile Assyrian armies are pictured as a destroying tempest of hail and a storm that is so great its waters fill every river and stream on the land so that they overflow their banks and the waters of the flood sweep across the land until the entire land is flooded. The prideful, corrupt and extremely foolish scorners think that their covenants and lies will protect them from such a flood.

The judgment of God is likened to a whip and a scourge, because of its severity; and called overflowing because of its utter destruction to the land of Ephraim in Samaria and the land of Judah by the Assyrians and the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The entire land and the cities of Israel and Judah were laid waste. This highlights the truth that it matters not that an individual, a people or a nation proclaim to believe in God if they act wickedly and bring dishonour to His name they will not escape His judgment when they come upon the earth and pass through the whole world like a mighty torrent of a river flooding it banks.

We have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter: (v15) this does not mean that they actually spoke these words, but that they had sought shelter under falsehood. They obviously did not believe they had, it is the LORD through Isaiah saying that this is what they have done. It is not the people saying, "We have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter," but Isaiah using these words, it could be said in the following way, "You live with such a lack of fear and disdain for God's warnings that it is as though you have deceived yourselves by making lies your refuge and falsehood your shelter, because what you are trusting in will not protect or save you.

The lies and falsehoods that they had made their refuge and shelter could apply to one or all of the following things: -

- Trusting in the lies of the false teachers and the visions of the false prophets, especially the words they spoke promising the people peace when destruction was coming.
- Trusting in the many idols and pagan gods they had embraced to protect them.
- Trusting in the alliances and covenants they had made with pagan nations such as Assyria, Babylon and Egypt which they were forbidden to do.

These would be the primary things that would apply to Judah and Israel during the generations of Isaiah, but trusting in falsehoods is not limited to these things, but also embraces the following: -

- Trusting in wealth and riches, especially those that had been gained by deception, fraud and oppression.
- Trusting in outward acts of religion such as adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days, strictly keeping religious customs and traditions and trusting in works of righteousness.

Whoever puts their trust and hope in these things to save by them from the judgment to come is trusting in falsehoods.

A Foundation in Zion, a Stone, a Tested Stone, a Precious Cornerstone.

Isaiah 28:16-17 ----- ¹⁶therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.' ¹⁷And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."

Zion comes from the Hebrew word (*Tsiyown*) and refers to the mountain the city of Jerusalem is built upon. It carries the idea of a permanent capital mountain of Jerusalem in the sense of being readily seen and easily visible and noticed as an important sign (i.e., a significant and historic sign and guiding pillar). It is called God's Holy Mountain because Jerusalem God's Holy City sits on it.

Though Mount Zion is not distinguished for its elevation or grandeur and though it had nothing in itself to claim attention or to excite wonder, it was the most exalted and honoured above all mountains because it was selected as the place where God was to be worshipped and the place where God's city and God's temple is built and God's worship was established.

Even though Mount Sinai had all the awesome glory of the Almighty God descend upon it and the law came from there, Mount Zion excels in excellence over it. This is because from Mount Zion came the Messiah the Christ attended by a multitude of angels celebrating his birth and on Mount Zion the Messiah the Christ came into his own temple as Malachi in the following verse prophesied concerning him.

- Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1).

Added to all this royal glory, multitudes of angels ministered to the Lord in his temptation, at his resurrection and accompanied him in his ascension all from Mount Zion.

- Mount Sinai is the mountain of the Old Covenant of Law in contrast Mount Zion is the mountain of the New Covenant of Grace.
- Mount Sinai's glory of the law pales when stood before Mount Zion's grace and Christ's death and resurrection upon it.

Neither Mount Sinai nor Mount Zion can glory and boast in themselves for the following reasons. Mount Sinai is not famous or respected as a holy mountain and a mountain of God because of any majesty of itself, but because it was upon this mountain God descended and gave the Ten Commandments. It is this awesome and holy event that exalts Mount Sinai and not the mountain itself.

Likewise Mount Zion has no fame or glory of itself, its glory comes from being the honoured mountain God chose to build His Holy city upon and is the mountain that the Messiah the Christ the Saviour of the world died and rose again from. The real strength is not in Mount Zion itself, but in the LORD who is the head of the thousands of chariots and the heavenly host surrounding it and as such is the protector of his chosen dwelling-place.

Zion is sometimes used as an ancient name for Jerusalem itself and because it is often used in poetic and prophetic passages it can refer to:-

- The hill the city of Jerusalem is built on.
- The city of Jerusalem.
- The temple and by extension Judah and the people of God.

The LORD through Isaiah has just finished rebuking the people Judah for trusting in falsehoods and now with a triumphant tone tells them who they should be setting their hearts and hope upon is the invisible, immortal Holy Almighty God; the creator of all things and source of all life; the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob; the God of Israel; the promised Messiah the Christ that the prophets and the Scriptures proclaim was to come; the Lord Jesus Christ; the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

The sure foundation: the foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation," (v16) refers to the following three things: -

1. The Ten Commandments, can be seen as the foundation Stone of Zion, because they are a tested stone; a precious cornerstone and a sure foundation to the House of God, they are written by the finger of God; their standard is perfect in righteousness and perfect in justice; they are the perfect will of God for all His people and have been tested over decades and proved themselves perfect. Jesus summed up the six commandments concerning mankind, in his command, "love your neighbour as yourself," (Matt. 22:39).

This means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. James the brother of Jesus said: -

- If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well. (James 2:8).

James calls Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," the royal law and says if we are keeping this one law we are doing well. Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote: -

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

Paul shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the spirit underpinning the law is love, because the spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from all types of harm and hurt. Those who do all they can to love God with all their heart, mind and strength and love their neighbour as themselves. (Mark 12:30-31) will hear their Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Matthew 25:21). The reason it is a sure foundation is because if all the world followed it everyone would live securely and in safety. It is not the law that is at fault, but the sin within mankind.

- 2 The literal foundation stone that was laid on Mount Zion, the mountain the city Jerusalem sits on which is the capital city of Israel. It was upon this mountain of rock that the cornerstone for God's Temple was built. Built upon such a solid rock the majestic and glorious superstructure of the Temple would stand against the storms and tempests that would come against it over many generations. The two walls stood on the foundation stone at right angles to each other cemented and bonded together (symbolising Jews and Gentiles bonded together in Christ).
- 3 To the Lord Jesus Christ like the literal stone, he is the cornerstone of the Temple God is building in Christ (this spiritual temple is called the body of Christ, a new creature in Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God).

Jesus is the Head of this Temple made without human hands and the stones that its walls are built with are living stones (all faithful believers). The cement that binds these stones together is Jesus love and grace and like all cornerstones he binds the two walls made up of Jews and Gentiles together by the power of his cleansing blood and the Gospel of grace.

He is the Rock that no tempest or storm can move or destroyed, likewise all who abide by faith in this temple will never be overcome or cast down, their salvation and eternal destination in glory is certain. In the city of Jerusalem on Mount Zion this Stone was first laid, and from there spread to the surrounding nations and will continue to do so until God's glory covers the whole earth as it is prophesied in the following verse: -

- A stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold (symbols of the entire world system), all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34-35).
- As you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure." (Daniel 2:45).

Old Testament Scripture that speak of the cornerstone: -

- The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22).
- He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 8:14).

New Testament Scripture that speak of the cornerstone: -

- Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes"? (Matt. 21:42).
- This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. (Acts 4:11).
- As it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (Rom. 9:33).
- As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5).

Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world perfectly fulfilled the law of God in his life. He is the true foundation Stone of Zion and the true foundation Stone of all who belong to God. Isaiah in this chapter prophetically speaks of the stone being tried and tested (v16) and the New Testament shows us that Jesus was: -

- Tried and tested by the devil (Lu 4:1-13).
- Tried by and tested by men (Lu 20:1-38).
- Tried and tested even by God (Mt 27:46).

The stone is spoken of as being a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation whose standard is righteousness and justice for all. Paul when speaking to believing Gentiles said: -

- You (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints (the Jews) and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. (Ephes. 2:19-21).

Peter when talking of Jesus cites Isaiah's prophetic words: -

- For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:6).

To those who know the love and grace of God in Christ there is nothing more precious in this world than knowing him. Before time began God in His eternal mind planned and purposed that Jesus would be the centre of His entire plan of salvation for mankind, there is no other like him nor will there ever be. In him are the promises of God; the forgiveness of God; the grace of God; the love of God and eternal life, whoever has Christ is not only clothed with these blessings, but also clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Whoever believes will not be in haste: (v16) the word haste comes from the Hebrew word (*chuwsh*) it literally means to hurry and figuratively to be eager with excitement or enjoyment.

In the context of this chapter it means that those who believe will be of a calm temper and steadfast in their faith and not impulsive when making choices, neither will they be people like Israel of old that hurry to do what is wrong. Unlike Israel who turned to other gods seeking instant answers and solutions they will patiently hold fast their faith and wait upon the Lord.

The picture is of a violent storm beating against a house and those inside trusting that the foundation of the house is secure rather than fleeing to what they believe maybe a safer place as Israel did (i.e., turned to other gods). The idea is that the sure foundation of Zion would be so firm that whoever trusted it would have no cause of alarm and no cause to flee the house no matter how fierce the storm that beat against it. It means that those who trust on the Lord Jesus Christ the sure foundation will have no reason to flee on the Day of Judgment as a those who puts their trust in those things that will fail them.

I will make Justice the Line, and Righteousness the Plumb Line.

Isaiah 28:17 ----- ¹⁷And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."

I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb Line: (v17) the line and the plumb line carry the same idea. A line was used by builders and stonemasons to get a perfect straight horizontal line so that the foundation and stones laid would be perfectly level and perfectly straight. The plumb line was a piece of string with a lead weight on one end, it was used to keep the walls of the building in a perfect vertical line as the stones of the wall were laid line upon line increasing in height as the labourers worked upon the structure. Without the line and the plumb line there was no way of keeping the building perfectly level horizontally as it increased in size, and no way of keeping it perfectly vertical as it increased in height.

The line and the plumb line signify justice and righteousness, the idea is that if God's House is built upon these two lines it will become the Holy Structure the Master Architect designed it to originally be. The line embraces justice and justice embraces honesty and doing what is right and fair, while righteousness embraces the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, mercy, grace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and such like things. These are the things that keep the temple of God growing into the Holy structure it is designed to become. Whoever builds their life using these lines as their guide will on the Day of Judgment hear their master say: -

- Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matt. 25:21, 23) (Luke 19:17).

In contrast to this those who give no thought to these two lines and act corruptly and wickedly will be judged according to the perfect line of justice and the perfect plumb line of righteousness.

Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter: (v17) Israel and Judah had sought protection and shelter in the covenants they had made with pagan nations rather than in the LORD their God. Such covenants were a refuge of deception and lies because no nation no matter how great its weapons of war maybe can stand against the LORD when He sets His mind against them. The expression, “the refuge of lies,” also embraces their lying prophets, their idols, their riches, their prideful self-righteousness, and everything in which they placed their confidence and sought their refuge in.

The expression, “Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter,” means that God will expose the weakness and deception of all Israel’s lies, but it is not limited to this, but it also embraces the idea that God will expose and sweep away all the lies and deceptions that the global religions and the world trust in for salvation other than God’s eternal plan of salvation. The following verses show that hailstones and floods of waters are frequently used as images of God’s judgment and wrath: -

- Behold, the LORD has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand. (Isaiah 28:2).
- He gave them hail for rain, and fiery lightning bolts through their land. (Psalm 105:32).
- The LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones. (Isaiah 30:30).
- Thus says the LORD God: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath, and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to make a full end. (Ezek. 13:13).
- With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. (Ezek. 38:22).
- The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. (Rev. 8:7).
- God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Rev. 11:19).
- Great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. (Rev. 16:21).

Israel’s Covenant of Death and Agreement with Sheol will be Annulled.

Isaiah 28:18-21 ----- ¹⁸Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. ¹⁹As often as it passes through it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be sheer terror to understand the message. ²⁰For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in. ²¹For the LORD will rise up as on Mount Perazim; as in the Valley of Gibeon he will be roused; to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work!

The covenant with death and agreement with Sheol (the Hebrew word for grave) refers to the covenant Judah and Israel had made with pagan nations (i.e., Assyria and Egypt etc.), seeking their help rather than heeding the word of God that came to them through the prophets (especially Isaiah), and trusting in the strength and power of these nations to protect them rather than trust in God.

The overwhelming scourge passes through: (v17) refers to the many campaigns of the Assyrian armies that passed through the land of Israel in Samaria and the armies of Babylon that invaded the city of Jerusalem. By these armies the entire land and cities including Jerusalem were brought to ruin and waste and the land of Israel and Judah was stripped of the people of Israel for seventy years. Clearly the expression, "The overwhelming scourge," is a very apt description of the fierce and mighty armies of Assyria and Babylon and the destruction that followed them.

The bed is too short to stretch oneself on: (v20) the image here is of a person lying on a bed that is not only far too short for them, but the sheets and blankets are so small they do not cover them. This expression most likely carries the following two ideas: -

1. The people of Israel are in such terror of their enemies that they cannot sleep or find comfort in the night the fear is so great that they continually toss and turn in their bed during the long hours of the night.
2. The strength and might of the armies of Judah and of Israel are far too small in numbers to stand against the far greater armies of Assyria and Babylon and the walls of their fortified cities are not large or strong enough to protect and save them.

The LORD will rise up as on Mount Perazim; as in the Valley of Gibeon: (v21) on Mount Perazim King David obtained a great victory over the Philistines and in the Valley of Gibeon Joshua came to the aid of the people of Gibeon when they were being attacked by a coalition of Canaanite kings. Joshua called upon the sun to stand still so he would have more time to utterly destroy the armies of the Canaanite kings and the LORD caused it to stand still for a day and David went on to drive out all the Philistines from Gibeon.

Isaiah in these verses is saying, "Just as the LORD rose up on Mount Perazim and as in the Valley of Gibeon to do His work in destroying Israel's enemies through David and Joshua He will rise up to destroy His proud, wicked and rebellious people, which the LORD did through Assyria and Babylon.

Strange is the LORD'S deed and alien is his work: (v21) under normal circumstance God would be rising up to protect and defend His people, but in this scenario He is actually on the side of their enemies. He is using Assyria and Babylon to bring His judgment upon His own people this is why it is referred to as a strange and alien work, it is abnormal to what should be; normality is God fighting for His people, He should not have to be judging them in this way.

Do Not Scoff for the Destruction of the LORD is Against the Whole Land.

Isaiah 28:22-23 ----- ²²Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord GOD of hosts against the whole land. ²³Give ear, and hear my voice; give attention, and hear my speech.

At the time Isaiah was giving this prophecy the people (especially the rulers) scoffed and mocked him. Here he is warning them not to scoff at what he is saying, because by doing so they are likely to increase the punishment that will be inflicted upon them.

He then re-iterates to them that what he has seen in this vision is destruction over the whole land of Israel and pleads with them to not only hear what he has been saying, but also obey and do it (i.e., turn from their gods and wicked ways).

No One Threshes Grain for Bread Forever this is Wisdom of the LORD.

Isaiah 28:24-29 ----- ²⁴Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? does he continually open and harrow his ground? ²⁵When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and emmer as the border? ²⁶For he is rightly instructed; his God teaches him. ²⁷Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin, but dill is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod. ²⁸Does

one crush grain for bread? No, he does not thresh it forever; when he drives his cart wheel over it with his horses, he does not crush it. ²⁹This also comes from the LORD of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.

A farmer does not continually plough a field week after week he just ploughs it enough to sow the seed in its proper place so that it will produce the crops and fruit it has been designed to produce. Neither does a farmer crush the shell of the seed with a heavy iron sledge hammer or cart wheel since this would utterly destroy the seed, but rather crushes it with a small stick just enough to break the hard shell so the fruit inside has the best possible chance of flourishing.

Isaiah with these very vivid images is saying that God like a farmer will not bring trials, calamities and grief upon Israel forever, nor will he crush the nation so that it is utterly annihilated, but will break them just enough to produce the fruit they were as a nation originally designed to produce and called to be.

Summary: Jesus Christ the crown and glory of Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem, the people of Judah (the two tribes) and of Ephraim (the ten tribes of Israel), are likened to a beautiful fading flower, because they have turned away from the LORD their God. The LORD says He has one who is strong and mighty (i.e., Assyria and Babylon) that will cast down the proud of the entire nation, after which He will restore Jerusalem's glorious beauty on the top of the mount Zion.

In a limited sense this was fulfilled when Israel and Judah returned united as one nation after their seventy year captivity to rebuild their beloved city Jerusalem and the Temple of God, but the ultimate fulfillment will be that glorious day the Lord Jesus Christ the crown of glory and diadem of beauty returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End.