

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THEME:

The immediate invasion of Ephraim by Assyria is a picture of the future and a warning to Jerusalem.

REMARKS:

This chapter brings us to an entirely new section. The prophecies which were totally future are included in chapters 24-27 inclusively. From chapter 28 to chapter 35 we have prophecies which have a local and past fulfillment, also those that reach into the future and cover the same period as in the previous section. This section is identified by six woes: 28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1 and it culminates in the battle of Armageddon in chapter 34, followed by the millennial benefits brought to the earth in chapter 35.

This particular chapter is a fine illustration of the combination of the near and far view, the past and future events, the local and immediate and the general and far distant.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel, designated here by the term Ephraim was soon to go into Assyrian captivity. This was a preview of the coming future day, but it was to be a warning to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The first part was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, invaded Ephraim in 721 B.C., and overthrew the Northern Kingdom.

OUTLINE:

1. **A PROPHECY—The Immediate, Coming Captivity of Ephraim.** Verses 1-4
2. **A PICTURE—The Far Distant Judgment of the Day of The Lord.** Verses 5-13
3. **A PREVIEW—A Warning to Judah of a Coming Judgment.** Verses 14-22
4. **A PARABLE—The Final Judgment of God upon His People and His Method.** Verses 23-29

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!**

Ephraim and Israel are synonymous terms for the ten Northern Tribes, also called Samaria.

The picture here of drunkards is both literal and spiritual. They were in a stupor as far as spiritual understanding was concerned.

Verse 2—**Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.**

The Assyrian is designated here as a strong one, a destroying storm and a flood of mighty waters.

Verse 3—**The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:**

Here the prophet picks up the figure of the drunkards.

A high level of civilization had been developed in the Northern Kingdom with its comforts and outward beauty expressed in homes and gardens and trees.

Verse 5—**In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,**

Verse 6—**And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.**

Verse 7—**But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.**

Verse 8—**For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.**

Here the prophet shifts to the far off day with the expression “**in that day.**” Drunkenness, both literal and spiritual, will characterize that day.

Verse 9—**Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.**

Verse 10—**For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:**

Verse 11—**For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to his people.**

Verse 12—**To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear.**

Verse 13—But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

It is sections like this which have caused some to call Isaiah the “*prophet of the commonplace*.”

Teaching is a slow, patient, and continuous work. This is the way that even spiritual truth is imparted. God does not impart it in a flash to a lazy and lethargic soul. As the people lapse into apostasy in any age it becomes increasingly difficult to impart spiritual truth.

Verse 14—Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

The judgment coming to Israel in the north should be a warning to Judah in the south. Ephraim speaks to Jerusalem.

Verse 15—Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

The covenant with death and Sheol refers evidently to the future covenant of Israel with the Antichrist. (See Daniel 9:27).

Verse 16—Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Christ here is “a precious corner stone.”

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (I Peter 2:6-8).

Verse 17—Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Verse 18—And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Verse 19—From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

Verse 20—For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

Verse 21—For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as In the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

Verse 22—Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

The judgment of God is coming in the immediate future and in the Day of the Lord. On both occasions no human scheme can avert or divert the impending conflagration. The people are urged to believe and not scoff, as this merely intensifies the weight of the judgment.

Verse 23—Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

Verse 24—Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

Verse 25—When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast In the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?

Verse 26—For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

Verse 27—For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing Instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

Verse 28—Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

Verse 29—This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which Is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

This is similar to the parable of the wheat and tares. It is a picture here of a good sower who breaks up the earth with the plow and sows the different kinds of grain. There are soft and hard grains. Different methods must be employed in harvesting them. The soft grains must not be beaten with the same intensity as the harder ones or else they will be destroyed, however for the hard grains a flail is used.

The different grains are:	Fennel, cummin (parsley family)
	wheat
	barley
	rye

Thus God judges. The individual or nation actually determines the character of the judgment which is to fall upon them. This section throws added light on the following passages in Matthew.

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers. Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew 13:30).

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13:41-43).

John Calvin in his Institutes writes:

Scripture uniformly enjoins us to look with expectation for the advent of Christ.

John Knox agrees:

The Lord Jesus shall return, and that with expedition. What were this else but to reform the face of the whole earth, which never was nor yet shall be, till that righteous King and Judge appear for the restoration of all things.

~ end of chapter 28 ~

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