Session 9 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 28-29

1. Introduction
   1. Ask the Lord why He wants us to know this information and why He wants us to tell others about it. By asking this, we dialogue with Him, thereby positioning ourselves to grow in understanding.

*Tonight we are on session nine,* ***The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 28-29****. These two chapters go together. One thing that I want to remind you of constantly is that we are reading the prophecies from Isaiah 700 years BC, so 2,700 years ago, and it is easy to read these and think, “Wow, it must have been something back then!” The messages 2,700 years ago were given to a small number of people, but the Holy Spirit knew that the messages were for the large audience in the generation the Lord returns. Though there were hundreds of thousands affected by this, there are hundreds of millions in the generation the Lord returns affected by this. So when we look at this message, do not think, “Well, that is history.” No, this is word of the Lord for Israel, for America, for leaders in the Body of Christ, marketplace leaders. This is “word of the Lord” stuff for right now. So try to get the “2,700 years ago” thing out of your mind. Remember the Holy Spirit was thinking of the end story even when He was giving deposits along the way. It is culminating in the end in a grand crescendo.*

*So as I read these, and I ask the question, “Lord, why do You want me to know this?” I sense the Lord is saying, “Because this is what I am really emphasizing in this hour, even more than in Isaiah’s hour. Because the numbers of those whom it affected were much, much smaller in Isaiah’s day. Now it is not hundreds of thousands; it is hundreds of millions.”*

* 1. Isaiah 28-29 addressed the spiritually blind leaders of Jerusalem. He gave three *woe* *oracles*   
     (28:1-4; 29:1-4; 29:15-16)—they are applicable to leaders in Jerusalem and the nations today.

*In these two chapters that go together, Isaiah was addressing the spiritually blind leaders of Israel­–political leaders as well as spiritual leaders. So we can think of political leaders in our nation as well; it is not just Israel, because, remember, Israel is the center of the storyline. Whatever is the Lord is doing in Israel, He is doing in the nations in a different measure, in a different application, but the same themes. Whatever He is expressing to Israel, He is expressing to the nations as well, both in terms of promising glory and also His discipline and His judgments, so to the spiritually blind leaders, the political ones and the spiritual ones and the economic leaders of the day.*

*Now in these two chapters, there are three particular oracles. By an oracle, I mean a woe oracle where Isaiah lamented with a woe. His heart was pained. This was not just data that he was making known. A woe oracle actually got into his heart. It was real people in their real lives being under pressure and being challenged by God as well as by the enemy. It really got into him. The idea that there were three woe oracles in this one passage–I feel like the Lord is saying not to ever separate the truth, the negative truths, from a heart-felt connection to it.*

* 1. Outline for Isaiah 28-29

28:1-29 Woe #1—Isaiah’s lament over the leaders of Israel and Jerusalem

28:1-4 Woe #1—to the leadership in Ephraim or Israel (the northern kingdom)   
28:5-6 The beauty of the Messiah will be revealed in the end times  
28:7-13 The woe to Ephraim is extended to Jerusalem (the southern kingdom)  
28:14-22 The leaders of Jerusalem make a covenant of death   
28:23-29 Parable of the farmer: Jerusalem must accept God’s wisdom

29:1-16 Woes #2 & #3—God’s judgment of Jerusalem

29:1-4 Woe #2—Jerusalem will be besieged  
29:5-8 Jerusalem’s enemies will be destroyed  
29:9-14 The blindness of Jerusalem’s leaders   
29:15-16 Woe #3—Jerusalem refusing God’s leadership

29:17-24 The restoration and salvation of Israel

*Okay, we have an outline here. We are not going to go through all of that. The first section is a woe. There are three woes as I mentioned. Isaiah is lamenting over the leaders of Israel. Remember Israel is the north, and Judah is the south because there was a civil war. So the north is Israel, and they were always compromising. The south was Judah where Jerusalem was, where David was. That is the kingdom of Judah.*

*Right after the warnings and the negative, look at Isaiah 28:5–there is the positive. The Spirit of God says, “I want you to know the beauty of the Messiah is going to be openly revealed across the world.”*

*I look at that, and I say, “Wow!”*

*Then, right after that, in Isaiah 28:14-22—this is one of the really poignant, heavy parts of this passage—Isaiah says that the leaders of Israel have made a covenant with death. That covenant with death is on the enemy’s heart, to bring that up again in the generation the Lord returns. So this is not just an ancient warning that passed away. It is going to have a contemporary application in Israel and in the nations of the earth.*

*You can read the rest of it here. It goes back and forth between the negative—I am going to deal with darkness head on—and the positive—I am going to restore and recover. So Isaiah goes back and forth, the positive, the negative. The reason that is important to know is that a lot of groups are focused only on the positive. Some groups, not so many, are focused only on the negative. The prophetic burden of the Lord is positive* ***and*** *negative. We cannot pick one or the other because it is not the truth without both elements involved.*

* 1. Isaiah sought to convince the leaders of Jerusalem not to look to other nations for their national protection, but rather to trust the Lord to save them. Isaiah wanted the people in Jerusalem to avoid the suffering that the northern kingdom of Israel endured at the hands of the Assyrians.

*What Isaiah was doing here—and I feel this in my heart about contemporary leaders in the nations right now—he wanted to convince the leaders of Jerusalem not to look to other nations for the national safety. He was convincing them, “Do not go down to Egypt and make a covenant to try to get out of pressure with Assyria. Do not wheel and deal with Assyria and compromise and make a covenant with them to buy your way out of trouble. Do not do that! Call out on the name of the Lord.”*

*We look back, and we say, “Well, that is kind of neat.”*

*The Lord is saying through this, as it were, “I am saying the same thing to America. I am saying the same thing to Israel right now.” Right now the most normal paradigm in any nation is to make political alliances with other nations to get out of trouble. This is what Isaiah was resisting with great energy.*

*I look at today, and I think, “Isaiah, you just would not have fit in well today at all, whether in the US scene or the Israel scene or the international scene” because he kept saying, “Cry out to God. Walk out the covenant with God, and do not get into a compromising covenant with any nation because you think it can make you better, not if it makes you compromise your covenant with God.”*

*Now the reason Isaiah was so energized about this in Jerusalem down south—that is where Isaiah lived, down in Jerusalem, down south—was because he saw the trouble up north. Remember the civil war had happened about 200 years earlier. The north and the south had been divided for about 200 years, and they stayed divided. They never got healed because the north went into judgment, was scattered in the nations, and never actually returned. That is what is referred to as the ten lost tribes of Israel. They are scattered in the nations somewhere. Because they were scattered up north in Isaiah’s lifetime, he was down south saying, “Guys, the same thing is going to happen to you down here that happened to them up there, because they compromised the covenant with God to make covenants with nations. They did not call out to the Lord. You are in the same trajectory right now.”*

*The leaders of Jerusalem said, “Oh Isaiah, just calm down a little bit! Let’s be practical.”*

*He said, “No! Look what happened up north.”*

*“Yeah, but they were really bad. You know we are not nearly so bad.”*

* 1. Some of the prophecies in Isaiah 28-29 were fulfilled in part in context to Assyria’s aggression against Jerusalem; they will be fulfilled completely in the generation the Lord returns.

*This is the same principle—I say it almost every session, and this is true not just in Isaiah but in all sixteen of the prophets of the Old Testament prophets—that many of the prophecies had a partial fulfillment that was within the generation or two of the prophecy. They call that a “near fulfillment.” It was a partial, local one. Many of them have a distant, far, global fulfillment in the generation the Lord returns.*

*So there is a partial fulfillment that is near, within a generation or two. Then there is a distant fulfillment in the generation the Lord returns. I do not know that the prophets knew this, but by the Holy Spirit’s orchestration there are key phrases all along in the prophecies so that you know it is for the end of the age because it did not happen 2,700 years ago or 2,000 years ago. There are key qualifiers like, “It will touch the ends of the earth...” things like that. “All nations will tremble…” things like that. “Israel will be saved and cry out to God.” There are things like that to give indications that it is for the generation the Lord returns.*

* + 1. Isaiah 28:1-13 was probably spoken just before the Assyria invasion of Israel in 721 BC.
    2. Isaiah 28:14-29:24 was probably spoken before the Assyria invasion of Judah in 701 BC.

*These two really heavy prophecies said that there was the Assyrian scourge, this whip. Remember the superpower of the day was Assyria. Assyria was a big part of the current Middle East nations. It was structured differently, but basically it was Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey. It was that geographic area. They were the superpower of the day, Assyria. They have long been destroyed as an empire, many years ago. They were the superpower for about 300 years. They were a terror to everyone. They were cruel. I mean they were evil, evil people. They brought torment and cruelty wherever they went.*

*Here is what Isaiah is saying, “Guys in the south, leaders in the south, the Assyrian whip and scourge has gone in the north. It is coming down here. If we do not get right with God, it is coming down here to wake us up. Then secondly, not only is Assyria going to march through the south”—which is called Judah—“through our southern territory, but it is going to get more specific; they are going to have a siege around the city of Jerusalem. They are going to surround us to destroy us.”*

*Now as he was saying this, the leaders of Isaiah’s day were saying like, “Isaiah, that happened up north. That is not going to happen here.”*

*Isaiah said, “It* ***is*** *going to happen here.”*

*Here is the reason we care about this: because it is the same storyline of what the Antichrist is going to do. The Antichrist is going to march through Israel, but not only Israel. He is going to march through many nations. I mean we read the script, and we see Israel. Read it carefully. He is going to be marching through many nations. One guy said, “Well, if I am not in Israel, at least I won’t be in the middle of what the Antichrist is doing.”*

*I answer, “Do you think he is going to leave the nations alone? He is coming after all the nations. He will not succeed, but that is what is on his heart.”*

*At the end, in the generation the Lord returns, the Antichrist will be established in Israel. He will surround Israel, a siege around the city, Jerusalem, to try to destroy it just like the storyline of Isaiah 28-29. It is going to happen again, but more intensely. So don’t read Isaiah 28-29 and say, “I do not really get history, so I do not need it.” Read it as tomorrow’s newspaper, as the future. This is the storyline that is going to unfold again.*

*I think it is unfolding in the days not long down the road. I think, as I have been saying for years, I think there are people alive on the earth today that will see it with their eyes. Maybe it is the two-year olds. Maybe it is the twenty-year olds. I do not know. I do not know what age, but I think that there are people who will actually see this storyline unfold.*

* 1. The Lord promised victory and salvation for the remnant of His people and to defeat the Assyrian (29:5; 30:31). The total defeat of the Assyrian king and his empire is a type of the Lord defeating the Antichrist as the “end-time Assyrian.” Micah referred to the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” (Mic. 5:5).

4And He [Jesus] shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord…now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; 5And this One [Jesus] shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him… (Mic. 5:4-5)

*The good news is the Lord says throughout the prophets and even here in Isaiah 28-29 that the bad guys are defeated. The Assyrians lose. The people of God who say yes win. The Lord says, “The negative, the negative, yeah, but the glory is coming. The remnant will be saved. The people who cry out to God will walk in victory. The evil empire of the Antichrist will be overthrown.” Again, the total defeat of Assyria back then was a type and a picture of the total defeat of the end-time Assyrian. The Antichrist is the end-time Assyrian, the end-time Pharaoh, the end-time king of Babylon. He is the fullness of what these other ones were a smaller picture of in their generation.*

1. Woe #1—Isaiah’s lament over the leaders of Israel & Jerusalem (28:1-29)
   1. Isaiah lamented the sin and coming suffering of the proud leaders of Ephraim (28:1-4). The Lord longed for the leadership in Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) to repent of their sin.

1Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower…2Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one [Assyria], like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them [Israel] down to the earth with His hand.3The…drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot… (Isa. 28:1-3)

*Let’s look at the first woe. We are going to go through some of this pretty fast. This first woe he starts off and says, “Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim”—you think, what?—“whose glorious beauty is a fading flower.” Ephraim is Israel. It is the north kingdom. Because Ephraim was the largest tribe up there, so they sometimes called it Israel and sometimes called it Ephraim. It means the northern kingdom.*

*He said that the crown of pride of the northern kingdom was about to be smashed. In Isaiah’s time, a few years after this prophecy is when the Assyrian superpower marched into the north, took the population out of the land, and put them in prison and work camps all over the Middle East. Israel—the north—never recovered.*

* + 1. ***Fading flower***: Ephraim had once been admired, but their glory was like a fading flower.

*When Isaiah said that Ephraim is a fading flower, he meant the glory of the north, because that northern kingdom was so strong, and it was prosperous. It had a mighty army. It was very admired by nations around. Isaiah said, “No, it is over.”*

*They said, “No, the north is too strong. It is too powerful. It is too rich. It cannot be over.”*

*He said, “The flower is gone.” At the very core—this is not a small thing—he said that the spiritual and the political leaders up north were alcoholics. I mean specifically that was the issue: they were drunkards. He said that the spiritual leaders were drunkards and that they were making horrible decisions in that spirit of stupor from alcohol.*

*Now this is a really important point because in Luke 21:34—I do not have that on the notes—Jesus identifies drunkenness as one of the two or three main things—immorality and drunkenness and another thing or two—that are going to capture people in the end-time storyline. They are going to look to self-medicate to get pressure off them.*

*Drunkenness is not a small thing. It was drunkenness even more than the idolatry and the immorality and the covetousness and the bitterness and the injustice that set all the dominos going down the trajectory of horrible decision making. He pointed that out.*

* + 1. ***Mighty one***: The mighty and strong one spoke of the Assyrian king and his military might.

*Then he says in verse 2—this is terrifying—the Lord has a mighty and strong one. He says that God is raising up a mighty and strong leader or empire. You could say either one. He meant Assyria. He went on, “Drunken stupor, proud, northern kingdom, you are so into your own pleasure way. You have no idea the hour of history you are in. You are making terrible decisions before the Lord,” because the leadership literally was given over to drunkenness. The Lord has a mighty and a strong army or king; it would be one and the same.*

*Now look what is going to happen, because this is going to happen again is the reason. It was Assyria back then; it is the Antichrist empire in the days to come. This army will come after you in the north like a hailstorm, a tempest of hell. A terrifying fierce storm of hail, a destroying storm and a flooding rain is going to come. There are going to be floods and storms and hurricanes. It is going to come, and he is not talking about weather patterns. He is talking about the fierceness of the army that is going to attack them in the north.*

* + 1. ***His hand***: The hand of God used Assyria to defeat Israel (Ephraim). God is the prime mover via His leadership over historical events. He works through others who are secondary causes.

*He says that this is going to bring you down to the earth. It is going to be by God’s hand—that is disturbing—because the northern kingdom was in covenant with God, but they were not faithful to the covenant. He said that God is going to bring you down.*

*Look at that: it was the hand of God working, using the evil Assyrians. Again, one of the most offensive doctrines in the Bible is that God uses evil leaders and empires to discipline His people to wake them up. Then He disciplines and destroys the evil empire that He used. God is the prime mover in historical events. He always, not always, but usually has secondary causes. We look at nations coming and going. The Lord would say, “I am pulling the strings behind nations. They have a certain liberty to do what is in their heart in their wickedness. They are all flowing into a master plan of producing what I want at the end of the age.”*

* + 1. ***Trampled***: Assyria violently trampled Israel, coming as a terrible hailstorm and flooding rain (28:2-3). The Assyrians trampled to the ground the once-beautiful flower of Ephraim.

*He says that Israel is going to be trampled. Verse 3, “and the drunkards are going to be trampled”—in a military way—“under foot.” Of course it happened in 721 BC. It is one of the big dates of all time in the Old Testament history. 721 is one of the two or three biggest most important, terrible, terrible dates.*

* 1. The beauty of the Messiah will be revealed in the end times (28:5-6). Jesus is the glorious crown or beautiful diadem of God’s kingdom. Isaiah emphasized the Messiah’s beauty being openly seen in the end times (4:2; 28:5; 33:17). Jesus will save the remnant of Israel, establish justice in their courts, and help their military withstand the armies of the Antichrist (Zech. 14:1-5).

5In that day the Lord of hosts [Jesus] will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people, 6for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment [their judges], and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate [their military]. (Isa. 28:5-6)

*Right after this horrible news, Isaiah was still talking to the leaders in the south. He was describing the north. They were saying, “Yeah, they are bad guys. We have been in a civil war with them for 200 years. We have always known they were bad.” Isaiah was setting them up to say, “Yes, the north is bad,” because Isaiah was going to turn on them and say, “You are doing the same thing as the north!” That is where it is going. I am getting ahead of myself. They did not know he was setting them up. He was getting them to agree with them. Isaiah was getting the southern Jerusalem leaders to agree with him that God was just in what He was doing in the north, then he was going to turn around and say, “But that is what you are doing, too, and the same trouble is coming.”*

*Fast forward 2,700 years. This is the message God is saying, not just to Israel, but to the nations of the world. He is saying, “You are not paying attention to My leadership. You are indulging in drunkenness and immorality and all kinds of other things. Your decision-making is poor. You do not know the trajectory that you are in.” Because so many are stuck in that paradigm, they don’t even think it is weird or wrong. We need a fresh look from the Isaiah prophetic spirit to catch the freshness of “though it is common and widespread, it is serious and it has consequences before the Lord,” because the Lord cares for love and righteousness to go forth in the nations.*

*Look what he says in verse 5, “In that day, the Lord of hosts”—the Messiah, Jesus—“He will be”* seen *is the idea “as a crown of glory.” He says, “Ephraim was a crown of glory,” meaning they did well for some years. The real crown of glory is not Ephraim or Judah. It is a man. He is beautiful. He is the diadem of glory in the kingdom. He is going to reveal Himself in His beauty and His glory to the remnant. The remnant are always the people that say yes, that keep saying yes to Him.*

*Then, verse 6, He is going to restore justice. That is what is on His heart. The part I really like about this verse is that Isaiah emphasizes the Messiah’s beauty being openly revealed in the generation the Lord returns. Of course, what happens in fullness when Jesus appears in the sky is happening in part right now, but in an increasing, accelerated way. Meaning, the Holy Spirit is focused on the beauty of the Messiah. Look at this, “a crown of glory, a diadem,” which is a crown, “of beauty.” So He will have authority as He manifests His glory and His beauty to the nations. He is going to do that in fullness when He returns. Whatever is going to happen when Jesus returns in the positive sense is escalating, the measure of it is increasing, the closer we get to His return.*

*So as an individual I look at these prophecies, as a shepherd, as a pastor. Three times Isaiah says it: Isaiah 4:2; 28:5; 33:17. Three times he says that in that day the beauty is going to be the main storyline, the beauty of the Messiah. So I do “one plus one is two,” and I am going to focus on the beauty. That is what the Spirit is about to unfold in a new measure, the beauty of the Lord.*

* + 1. ***Sits in judgment***: Jesus will restore justice in legal systems, including their courts and judges.
    2. ***Turn back the battle***: The Lord will empower the Israeli army to resist the Antichrist even *before* Jesus returns. Zechariah emphasized this several times (Zech. 9:13; 10:3-7; 12:5-8) prophesying that the Lord will anoint Israeli soldiers as He anointed David (Zech. 12:8).

5They shall be like mighty men, who tread down their enemies in…in the battle. They shall fight because the Lord is with them…7Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man… (Zech. 10:5-7)

8The Lord will defend…Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David…like the Angel of the Lord before them. (Zech. 12:8)

1. the woe to Ephraim is extended to Jerusalem (Isa. 28:7-13)
   1. The priests and false prophets in Jerusalem were alcoholics, like the leaders in Ephraim (28:7-8).

7But they also [leaders in Jerusalem] have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way… they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8For all tables are full of vomit… (Isa. 28:7-8)

*Now here in verse 7-13, he is going to turn the conversation to the leaders of Jerusalem. In verse 7 He says, “But they also…” The “they also” as you study it in context you see he is looking at Jerusalem saying, “You guys now, not just Ephraim up north, are drunkards. You are drunkards, you also. You are in the same pride. You are in the same delusion.” See, these guys were powerful, political leaders. They were economically wealthy. They had honor in their social status. They got intoxicated by their position and their pleasures. They just thought life would always be like it was. Isaiah says, “No, no! They also have erred through wine and through intoxicating drink.”*

* + 1. ***Err in vision***: Their drunkenness caused them to distort their “visions” and decision-making and to embrace a distorted view of God and His leadership.
    2. ***Intoxicating drink***: Jesus highlighted the serious problem of drunkenness in the end-times. He called His people to pay close attention to their heart to avoid being caught in the snare of drunkenness or immorality to “self-medicate” in seeking an escape with quick relief.

25“There will be…distress of nations…34But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [immorality], drunkenness, and…that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on…the whole earth.”   
(Lk. 21:25-35)

*I think it is important that we do not just look at this and say, “Well, you know, make sure you do not drink too much.” I mean, that is a good thing. Drunkenness already is, but is going to be increasingly a major stronghold, even among people in the kingdom of God.*

*Luke 21:34, Jesus said that when the snare goes forth across the whole earth, make sure you are not ensnared by carousing or immorality or drunkenness. Make sure you pay attention to those two. Do not self-medicate. Rather, engage with the Spirit and connect with Him. Do not get out of your pressure through immorality or through drunkenness or drugs or some mind-altering type of way.*

* 1. ***They also***: The woe against the leaders of Ephraim (28:1-4) was extended to the leaders in Jerusalem (28:7, 14) who embraced the same sins. There is debate if verse 7 refers to the rulers in Ephraim or Jerusalem. The context of Isaiah 28-29 is God’s word to the leaders in Jerusalem (28:14).
  2. Isaiah’s audience in Judah agreed that God’s judgment on Israel in 721 BC was proof of the consequences of their rebellion. Yet, the leaders of Jerusalem still embraced the same sin and pride.
  3. The false prophets mocked Isaiah’s teaching as toddler-level gibberish (28:9-10).

9Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. (Isa. 28:9-10)

*These leaders, these priests and prophets in Jerusalem, did not like what Isaiah was saying at all. He was saying, “You priests, you prophets, you are false prophets.” I mean Isaiah was a prophet down in Jerusalem. He* ***was*** *one of the Jerusalem prophets. He was talking to the prophets and the priests and the teachers. He was saying, “You guys are deluded in your compromise, in your drunkenness, in your immorality. You are not teaching the truth. You are just building up your own profiles.” These guys were upset. So these false prophets and teachers mock him. They are mocking Isaiah here in verse 9-10.*

*They are saying—well, I really like it how Constable said it. I just took it like word, near word for word from him in paragraph E. Let me read paragraph E, and then we will go back and read D, the passage. He said, “The drunken leaders mocked Isaiah for the simplicity and repetition in which he was presenting the Lord’s messages.” They scoffed at his preaching as though it were “Sunday school moralizing.”*

*So Isaiah said, “Trust God. Love justice. Forgive people. Show kindness.”*

*They were saying, “Okay, okay. You know we went through the religious class. We got it, Isaiah.” But Isaiah would not back down. They scoffed at his remarks as being Sunday school moralizing appropriate for infants. “It is irrelevant. We are educated, powerful men who know the art of politics. We know international intrigue. We know international financing.” Isaiah kept addressing them like children, saying to trust God and not to compromise. They said, “Really, that is what you have to tell us? Come on, get with it! Give us something more than what you are giving.”*

*So in verse 9, they were mocking Isaiah. They said, “Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he give his message? Oh, I know! To the babies weaned from milk. To the children’s church, that is who Isaiah will preach to. Those drawn just from the breast, the two-year olds. That is it. Isaiah, here, give it to them.”*

*Now verse 10 is an interesting verse. I have read it through in several different commentaries, and they all agree that verse 10 is impossible to really interpret in a right way. Because there are lots of phrases and syllables, it is like babbling of a child. That is what the false prophets are saying to Isaiah, “You babble. You say little simpleton things. You are so naïve, like giving precept on precept, giving your A, B, Cs. Give you one, two, threes, your line upon line, give a little here, a little there.”*

* 1. “The drunken leaders mocked Isaiah for the simplicity and repetition with which he presented the Lord’s messages. They scoffed at his remarks as Sunday School moralizing, appropriate for infants but irrelevant to men who understand the art of politics. They accused Isaiah of speaking to them like children by advocating trust in God not in foreign alliances.”—***Constable***.

*Neither Isaiah nor the Holy Spirit was amused at their mockery. So Isaiah said, because the Holy Spirit gave this answer, “So you think my stuff is babbling? Stammering like a little baby? Stammering lips? That is what I am like to you, right? I am naïve, that I do not get it. I tell you to trust God, obey God, press into God.”*

*“Yes, you do not get it.”*

* 1. Isaiah used the very words of Jerusalem’s leaders to warn them about an Assyrian invasion of their land (28:11-12). If they refused to receive God’s prophetic words, saying they were too simple, sounding like the babbling of “stammering lips,” then He would teach them by foreign oppressors with stammering lips (speaking in a foreign language). He would continue to teach them “a little here and a little there,” but this time through the trials of captivity. The Lord spoke to Jerusalem’s scoffing leaders through the Assyrians who spoke in a foreign language as barbarians, or with stammering lips.

11For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, 12to whom He said, “This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest”… yet they would not hear. 13But the word of the Lord was to them, “Precept upon precept…line upon line, here a little, there a little,” that they might…be broken and snared and caught [taken into captivity]. (Isa. 28:11-13)

*He said, “Okay, so if my babbling, stammering lips is all that you will listen to,” verse 11, “God is going to speak to you through stammering lips.” What he meant was, “The Assyrians are going to come with a foreign language you cannot understand. If you think I babble, you wait until God speaks to you through the other babblers.” He says, “He will get your attention.” Verse 13, “But the Word of the Lord to those leaders was, ‘God will give you line on line, little here, little there’ but through the difficulties of the trouble of the Assyrians attacking you. If you will not take the Word of the Lord, then you will learn little by little, line by line, in the face of difficulty and very, very harsh circumstances. Because you will not take my simple word, and you call it babbling, God is going to babble to you through foreign languages. You are going to be in prison camps, and you are not going to understand anything they are saying.” So that was pretty strong response back to them.*

*I just wanted you to understand that passage. Here is one of the reasons I am sharing it with you: I just picture Isaiah as a messenger. And we are messengers; that is what we aspire to be, faithful witnesses of the truth. Here is Isaiah the premiere messenger and not just of his generation. When I look at all of salvation history, very few had the prophetic revelation of Isaiah. Isaiah had more about the end-time storyline. John the apostle in Revelation was different. Isaiah actually had more than John; John’s was just different. I look at this guy, and in his generation he was mocked as a teacher with babbling, stammering lips, who was naïve, with a message nobody could make any sense of because it was too simple.*

* 1. ***Mocking***: Peter warned the saints *first* to be aware of the dangers of a scoffing or mocking spirit. He wanted God’s people to know what they will be up against. All who stand for God’s truth in the end times will be resisted by scoffers or mockers from both, outside and inside of the Church. God’s messengers through history have been mocked most by people with a religious heritage.

3Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days…4saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” (2 Pet. 3:3-4)

* + 1. It was a top priority to Peter to warn the saints not to become cynical. Rather, we are to be “anointed observers” of the signs of the times.
    2. Many draw back from teaching on the end times because of the fear of man. Scoffers will mock those who seek to understand, proclaim, and prepare for the Lord’s return.

*So my point is this: in 2 Peter 3:3, Peter said, “First of all, know this”–and that is so interesting that he says, “First of all.” I have always been troubled by that. He said, “First of all, here is what you should know about the end times.” Like, okay, what would that be? Jesus is Lord. We have the power of God. The blood of Jesus prevails. He said, “First of all,” and you kind of wait. What is he going to say?*

*He said, “Know this, mockers will come.” If you do not know that the mockers will come with a familiar face, with an honorable face, then they will steal the courage right out of your heart. There will be a handful of them there. You will be standing alone, and you will find yourself with nothing to say, intimidated. Peter said you better know you will face mockers everywhere you go. So that is what Isaiah faces.*

*Here he was giving one of the most important words for that hour. They just threw it right back at him and said, “You don’t really get anything! You are a simpleton! You do not get the complicated nuances of real life, Isaiah. Get with it, because we are not going with you. We know the Bible. We are going our own direction.”*

*Isaiah had a group that was with him. You find that in Isaiah 8. He talks about a company of people that were together. It was not very large. I look at guys like Isaiah, and I look at some others through church history, and I think, “Man, it takes courage!” I mean, we have a lot of good friends in unity going in one direction. Imagine some of those guys throughout history who stood nearly alone in the face of mocking. So I just wanted you to get a snapshot of that here because mocking is part of the assignment. Mocked by people with a Bible heritage. Not just mocked by the atheist down the road, but mocked by the guy with Bible knowledge. That is who was mocking Isaiah.*

* + 1. The Lord chose to speak to His cynical people who were mocking His prophetic words through unintelligible speech that was to them as stammering lips or a foreign tongue.
    2. Paul used 28:11 to affirm speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:21). Again, God choses to speak to cynical people through unintelligible speech that seems as stammering lips of another tongue.
  1. ***Caught***: Sennacherib claimed to have taken 200,000 captives from Judah in 701 BC.
  2. ***To rest***: God had promised “rest” to any in Israel who honored God’s covenant. This rest was available to those faithful to the covenant with Lord and who refused the covenant of death.

1. The leaders of Jerusalem make a covenant of death (Isa. 28:14-22)
   1. The rulers in Jerusalem made a covenant of death (28:14-15). This was a political covenant or treaty with a nation—either with Egypt to help protect them from Assyria (30:1-3) or directly with the Assyrians to buy protection. Yet Israel had already made a covenant with the Lord for protection (Ex. 19).

14Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule…in Jerusalem, 15because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol [hell] we are in agreement.   
When the overflowing scourge [of the Antichrist] passes through, it will not come to us…” 16“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily. 17Also…the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. 18Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. 19As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over…it will be a terror just to understand the report.” (Isa. 28:14-19)

*Now this here is really intense. This to me is the most intense. Well, there are a couple “most intense” parts, but this is the intense of the intense; how is that? Verse 14, he really picks up steam here. He is talking to his generation. Beloved, prophetically, he is not just talking to a couple hundred thousand people who would be affected in his day; there are hundreds of millions who will be affected by this in the days around the corner, down the road.*

*Verse 14, he says, “Hear the Word of the Lord, you scornful men who rule in Jerusalem.” He is focused on Jerusalem, because up north the die has been cast. They are already hardening their heart. Almost no one is repenting. Up north, the judgment is coming because they will not respond to anything. It came even in Isaiah’s lifetime. In the south, there was still a chance for change to happen.*

*By the way, 2 Chronicles 29, Hezekiah was a contemporary with Isaiah. Hezekiah led a reform. They had a season of revival in Isaiah and Hezekiah’s day in 2 Chronicles 29. So Isaiah really did make an impact in that day. There was change, even in his generation. The heavy stuff did not happen until afterwards, until after his day, so it did make a big difference.*

*Here is the word, verse 14. It applied in Isaiah’s day, but it has tremendous application in the days to come. He says, verse 14, “Hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men who rule in Jerusalem. Here is what you say in your heart, verse 15, “…we have made a covenant with death. We have made a covenant with Sheol.” Sheol is hell, the underground world, the grave. “We made an agreement with it. When the overflowing scourge passes through the nations, it will not come to us.”*

*So what is going on, the leaders of Israel made a covenant with one of the nations. The commentators debate. Some say it was with Egypt. That is a good reason why it would be Egypt. Others say the covenant was with the Assyrians, that they made an agreement with the Assyrians, a compromising agreement, where they agreed to this and that if the Assyrians would not attack them. So it was a compromise. It was a covenant with them to submit to them on their terms. So some commentators say it was Assyria; some say it is Egypt. To me it does matter to me which nation they made the agreement with. Here is the idea: they were in trouble because the Assyrian superpower was on their doorstep, breathing down their neck. They either went down south to Egypt and said, “Hey, let’s work together,” or they went to Assyria and said, “Hey, we will be one of your vassals. We will be on your team. We will not do the “covenant with God” thing so big. We will kind of get on your team.” Either way it goes, they made a covenant, and it was a covenant with death.*

*Here is what the Assyrians told them. The Assyrians told them that if you make this covenant with us, when our scourge passes through the land, when it comes through the land here, it is not going to affect you at all. The scourge that we are going to bring through the land, we will bypass Israel. We are going to show kindness to Israel. The Israel leaders said, “Oh, okay. That is really good. You are going to show kindness to us. You are going to keep your covenant with us.”*

*Well, this is the same deal the Antichrist is going to offer the nations and Israel. The Antichrist is going to offer a covenant with Israel and say, ‘I will not trouble you when I march through the nations. We will be on the same team.” This is the same type of covenant that the leaders of Jerusalem made 2,700 years ago, either with Assyria or Egypt, one or the other. Again, the commentators debate it. It does not really matter. It is the idea they did not trust God. They did not cry out to God. They made a covenant, a political alliance, with men for their safety. That is the problem. They said, at the end of verse 15, “When the overflowing scourge passes through,” meaning when the mighty military invasion happens and they march through countries and rape and pillage and burn and steal, “it will not come to us,”–they will not bother us because they promised us they would not.*

*Verse 16, Isaiah says, “Thus says the Lord,” the covenant is with the Messiah, not with Assyria or Egypt. “Thus says the Lord, ‘I lay in Zion a foundation stone.’” That is, “I have the foundation for a sure covenant with you. Whoever believes in My covenant and My Messiah, whoever believes will not act hastily.” Notice that in verse 16, that is really a key, “They will not act hastily.” Because if you are in fear, and the Antichrist and all the different threats and panics are emerging, and you are not anchored in a covenant with a transcendent God, you will be tempted to act hastily. Like, “Okay, I will sign the dotted line. Okay, I will agree. Okay, I will change my doctrine. Okay, I will be quiet on these things from now on.” Under panic and fear people act hastily. That is what the leaders of Jerusalem did because they did not lay hold of, verse 16, the stone that was laid in Zion of which in the New Testament there are some ten verses that tell us that this is Jesus, that this is the promise of the Messiah. We all know that passage.*

*Verse 18, Isaiah goes on to say, “I want you to know your covenant with death”—he is saying this sarcastically—“this covenant you made for protection is going to bring death to your nation. You should have made your covenant with God and taken your chances with being radical for God and faithful for God. You should have done it that way. You should have been faithful to the Lord. Instead you made a covenant with death.” He says in verse 18, “It is going to be annulled. The bad guys are not going to keep it. They are not going to keep their deal. They are going to betray you. Your agreement with hell, Sheol, is not going to hold up. Under pressure they are going to turn on you, and they are going to burn you and kill you.” He says, “and when the overflowing scourge, that military violent invasion marches through the nations, it will pass right through Israel. It will trample you to the ground.”*

*Now Isaiah is the only one saying this. These leaders are prosperous. They have social status. They have all the privileges and powers in society and all the pomp and circumstances. They look at him and say, “You are crazy. What do you mean? We have political intrigue. We are sophisticated negotiators. We can outsmart the people that we are in covenant with. We are making deals. We are smarter than they.”*

*Isaiah said in verse 18 that when the overflowing scourge—that is the military invasion with violence—passes through, it will trample Israel to the ground when it happens. Verse 19, “As often as it goes out, it will take you, morning by morning.” Later it says that day by day, night by night, it will pass through the land. It will be a terror just to hear the report of what is happening. You will be terrified hearing the news of what is happening because of this broken covenant. That is how bad this guy is.*

* 1. ***I lay in Zion a stone***: Israel’s safety is not found in political alliances, but in Messiah. God promised to lay a firm foundation in Jerusalem that they could build on and find protection in. Jesus is the tested and proven rock of safety who never fails. (Ps. 118:22; Zech. 3:9; 10:4; Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6).
  2. ***Cornerstone***: Acornerstone (or foundation stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones are set in reference to this stone, so the cornerstone determines the positioning of the entire structure. Jesus is the cornerstone who is precious in the sight of God and His people and is the sure foundation upon which we can build our life. This precious stone is the beautiful and glorious Messiah in 28:5.
     1. In the generation the Lord returns, a relationship with Jesus who is “the cornerstone laid in Zion” will be the only place of refuge from the storm of the Antichrist and the judgment of God.
     2. At the end of the Great Tribulation, the leaders of Jerusalem will receive Jesus as Messiah,   
        the One who will deliver them from the “covenant of death” (Mt. 23:39).
  3. ***Whoever believes***: This includes trusting in Jesus’ leadership in the time of escalating darkness instead of being overcome by fear, offense, or deception. God will preserve all believers who lean on Jesus, the cornerstone. Anyone can believe this testimony and rest all of their hopes on this foundation.
  4. ***Not act hastily***: Those who trust God need not act in hastily in fear and panic.
  5. ***Covenant of death***: The scornful leaders in Jerusalem imagined that by their superior negotiating skills that they could make alliances that would enable them to escape trouble. Isaiah sarcastically told them that their covenant was a covenant with death (28:18) since it would result in many people dying.
  6. ***Annulled***: The covenant with death was annulled or shown to be invalid when it did not save Israel from being trampled underfoot by the invading armies of Assyria in Isaiah’s day, and it will not protect Israel or any nation from the rage of the Antichrist in the end times.
  7. ***Righteous plummet***: Isaiah continued to use architectural imagery by speaking of measuring everything by a plummet or plumb line of righteousness. In the Great Tribulation, the Lord will measure the rebellious people in Israel and in the nations by His plumb line of righteousness.
     1. A measuring line was used by a carpenter to determine the exact measurements for the walls of a building. A plummet is a piece of lead attached to a string used to make a perfectly straight line.
     2. The Lord will make righteousness His measuring line for each person and nation just as an architect measures everything in an exacting way. Righteousness will prevail instead of sin.
  8. ***Justice***: His judgments are always according to justice. They are neither too severe nor too lenient.
  9. ***The refuge of lies***: The covenant of death was a “counterfeit refuge” that was based on lies, namely the lie that it would protect Israel from the coming storm. The false hope of security was based on lies. These lies were swept away or exposed by the overflowing waters of the Assyrian invasion.
  10. ***Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies***: God will use a hail storm to sweep away or expose the false hope of those taking refuge in lies. This speaks of the suddenness and totality of destruction. Flooding waters will overflow the hiding place—the place they seek for safety—in the covenant of death.
      1. The storm of God’s judgment through the Assyrian invasion overwhelmed those who took “refuge in lies.” God’s judgments are compared to a storm of hail that will reveal the falsehood of their crafty, sinful ways and will expose the deceptive nature of their covenant of death.
      2. God’s judgments are often compared to a storm of rain and hail and flooding waters (Ex. 9:18-34; Josh. 10:11; Ps. 78:47-48; Isa. 18:2, 17; 30:30; Ezek. 13:11, 13; 38:22; Hag. 2:17; Rev. 8:7; 11:19: 16:21; flood—Isa. 30:28; 59:19; Jer. 46:6-8; 47:2; Dan. 9:26; 11:22; Hab. 3:10; Nah. 1:8; Rev. 12:15-16; storm—Ps. 83:15; Prov. 1:27; Isa. 25:4; 28:2; Ezek. 38:9)
  11. The context of Isaiah 28 is eschatological. The four chapters before Isaiah 28 speak of the end times. The verses immediately after 28:18 are eschatological, describing God’s purposes on the whole earth (28:22). Between Isaiah’s *two references* to the “covenant with death” (28:15, 18) is the promise of Jesus coming as the “cornerstone” (28:16). This suggests that the activity associated with the “covenant of death” occurs both *before* (28:15) and *after* (28:18) Jesus’ first coming was as the stone laid in Zion. Isaiah spoke of a storm in a time *after* Jesus came to be laid in Zion as the foundation stone.

1. Israel will make a covenant with the Antichrist

*Israel will make a covenant with the Antichrist. This is the scenario of the generation when the Lord returns, because this “Isaiah 28 covenant of death” is going to be reenacted, but at a far bigger level. It is not just with Israel. Many, many nations are going to participate in this, not just Israel. This is an issue that our nation, your nation, that nation, every nation will face, not just Israel. It just so happens that Israel is the center of the storyline here. So again, what happens to Israel is what we see happen in other parts of the world as well, just in a different measure.*

* 1. Gabriel spoke to Daniel about the final 7 years of this age before the Messiah would come to rule the world from Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24-27). This final seven-year period just before Jesus’ return is often referred to as “Daniel’s 70th week.”

27He [Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [7 years]; but in the middle of the week he [Antichrist] shall bring an end to sacrifice [breaking the covenant] … (Dan. 9:27)

*Well, we are going to start here in Daniel 9. Most of you know this passage. Daniel 9 says that he, the Antichrist, will confirm a covenant. “He will confirm a covenant with many.” “Many” means many nations, not only Israel. Some people read this and see only Israel in it. I see the Middle East. I see Europe. I see America. I see Western nations. This is a covenant that brings peace in the Middle East, that brings together the problem of terrorism, of international biological problems, of food problems, of cash problems. It is a covenant that brings everybody to the table and working together.*

* + 1. ***One week***: Gabriel spoke of these seven years as a *week*. Israel referred to a week as being comprised of years (7 years) as well as a week of days (7 days).

*This covenant will be confirmed for one week. Well, in the Old Testament language, they spoke of a week of days, which is seven days—we say that—or they spoke of a week of years, which is seven years. So when somebody said, “Hey, I will see you in a week” in the ancient world, you had to ask, “A week of days or a week of years?” Typically you would probably know just by the tone of the conversation. He was talking about the Antichrist making a covenant for a week of years, for seven years.*

*Here is the problem. Everyone is going to be happy with the covenant. Everyone is going to be rejoicing. In the middle of that seven-year period, the middle of that week, he is going to bring sacrifice to an end in Jerusalem, which means he is going to break his deal with Jerusalem, because part of the deal is that he lets them have animal sacrifices in the temple. When he stops that, he is violating the covenant. That is code for “he broke the covenant.” When he says, “No more of your ancient Jewish religious stuff. Forget it. I am now God, and you have to worship me,” you know the conservative, rabbinical Jews are going to say? “What? You just broke your covenant with us!” So that will be the way that it is broken.*

* + 1. ***Many***: This political covenant will affect Israel and many nations. I assume the 10-nation confederation under the Antichrist will be involved in this covenant (Rev. 17:12).
  1. Israel’s leaders will make a covenant with the Antichrist that will result in them giving their authority to him seven years before Jesus’ coming (Isa. 28:14-18; Ezek. 38:8-12; Dan. 9:27; 11:45; 14; 39:26; Zech. 11:16; Lk. 19:11-28; Jn. 5:43; 1 Thes. 5:3). The leaders of Israel may initially assume that they are smarter than the Antichrist (hiding behind a façade of loving peace) and can out-negotiate him.
  2. The Great Tribulation starts with the Antichrist establishing a peace treaty (for 7 years in duration). It results in a counterfeit peace that lasts 3½ years (the first half of the final 7 years), then suddenly the Antichrist will break the treaty, resulting in the termination of Israel’s sacrifices in the temple.

3When they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains [Great Tribulation] upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thes. 5:3)

*Paul the apostle talks about this. He talks about a time at the end of the age where he says, “They will say, ‘Peace and safety,’ and then sudden destruction.” The nations will be saying, peace and safety, because there will be a covenant. There is going to be an international covenant that is going to bring peace and safety all around the nations.*

*Paul said, “Do not buy it when you hear the news of peace and safety.” He could have gone back to Daniel 9 and said, “It is only going to last three-and-a-half years. Trust me, that man who made the covenant with all these nations, that great international man of peace, he is going to pull his mask off, and he is not a man of peace; he is a man of war. He is going to betray Israel and every other nation that made a covenant with him.”*

*He said that suddenly, instead of peace and safety—it will be a short-lived peace and safety—“sudden destruction will come like labor pains upon a pregnant woman and they shall not escape.” Now the “they” he is talking about here, he is talking about people outside of the faith. When it says, “They shall say, ‘Peace and safety,’” it is people who do not honor the Word of God, because when this peace and safety emerges from a Middle East covenant bringing the nations together and Israel is happy, the prophetic Church is going to be saying, “No, it is the devil.”*

*“Oh my goodness!” the nations for three-and-a-half years will say, “The devil? What are you talking about? You Christians, you pray for unity and peace. Now we have it, and you say it is the devil.” Christians who say that will be regarded as enemy of the state. They will be regarded as troublemakers in a very, very serious way. They will be saying, “Wait! We have peace for the first time in forever. You guys are saying it is the devil. Are you kidding me?”*

*Now we know it is only going to last three-and-a-half years. I mean the fact that God gave us this information is really nice. It is really helpful because we will not be deceived by it. It is a burden, though, because for three-and-a-half years you have to own the truth of it before the truth is made known. That is going to be a real challenge for the forerunners because they are going to be telling people, “Do not buy it! Do not buy it. He is going to pull that mask off.” Well, Israel made the covenant. They all made the covenant.*

* 1. The Antichrist will use this covenant to get a stronghold in the land of Israel. He will plant part of his headquarters in Israel. The “glorious holy mountain” is in Jerusalem (the site of the temple).

45And he [Antichrist] shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas [Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea] and the glorious holy mountain [Jerusalem]… (Dan. 11:45)

*We find out in Daniel that the Antichrist will use his covenant to get a stronghold in the land of Israel. He actually sets up his headquarters in Israel, the Antichrist will, because he is a friend of the Jews and he is the friend of the Arabs. I mean, he is the man of peace! He is the solution! He brought the answer! They made a covenant with him. Look, it says here in Daniel 11:45, “He is going to set up his palace,” or his headquarters, there in Israel.*

* 1. Israel will have a short season of peace before they are attacked by the Antichrist (Ezek. 38:8-12). Israel’s time of peace and safety is seen in being content to live in “unwalled villages” instead of feeling the need for strong walls to ensure their security. The man (Antichrist) who helped to establish peace will eventually invade them with foreign armies.

8In the latter years you [Antichrist] will come into the land of those…gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel…brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9You will ascend, coming like a storm…you and all your troops and many peoples with you…you will make an evil plan: 11you will say, “I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely… 12to stretch out your hand against [Israel]…” (Ezek. 38:8-12)

*Everything will look good for a little while. There will be a short season of peace–peace and safety. Everyone will be saying, “Peace and safety,” except for the prophetic Church. Again, when people buy into the peace and safety, they will be making deals and signing their life onto things, too. It is not just they will say, “Peace and safety, leave me alone.” They will say, “Peace and safety, join us now.”*

*You might think, “Well, why wouldn’t we join it?” Because we have the prophetic scriptures and we know what is going on.*

*Verse 8 of Ezekiel 38 really teases this out. Let’s talk about verse 8 where “In the latter years,” or in the generation the Lord returns, the Antichrist will come into the land of Israel. So he is going to come into the land of Israel here, but notice in verse 8 that at the end, Israel is dwelling in safety. Israel is not in safety now. Why are they in safety then? Because a covenant has been made, so they have peace and safety, and all is well.*

*Isaiah said it is a covenant of death. It is a covenant that is going to bring death to your nation. The only covenant that is reliable is the true foundation stone in Zion, the tried and tested stone. That is the only One we can trust. That is the One upon whom we build our life, that precious foundation stone laid in Zion that is right in the middle of this passage of Isaiah 28.*

*Well, here Ezekiel goes on and explains, “You,” verse 9, Antichrist, “you will come like a storm. You with all of your armies and many peoples.” That means nations, many armies, will be with you. You will have an evil plan. They see you as a man of peace, but you will have a heart of war. You will come into Israel, verse 11, “You will say in your heart, ‘I will go up against a land”—notice—“of unwalled villages.” Israel will have unwalled villages because they have peace. They do not have to have the military functioning like they did before. They can use their money to develop the infrastructure of their nation, not their military.*

*The peace treaties are real, or it seems like. Verse 11, “You will go to a peaceful people.” That is the land of Israel. That is not Israel right now. “They dwell in safety.” This is after the covenant. “You will stretch out your hand against them.”*

* 1. ***Sheol***: The rulers in Jerusalem will made a covenant with Sheol or hell. There will be a demonic, supernatural element to this covenant since Satan will give the Antichrist his throne and authority (Rev. 13) and the Antichrist will ascend from the hell after his deadly head wound (Rev. 17:8).

15… “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol [hell] we are in agreement…”   
(Isa. 28:15)

2The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and great authority. (Rev. 13:2)

8The beast [Antichrist] that you saw…will ascend out of the bottomless pit… (Rev. 17:8)

1. The Lord’s unusual act: Judging His people (28:21-22)
   1. The Lord will arise to do an unusual act (28:21-22).

21For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim; He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon— that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual act.   
22Now therefore, do not be mockers, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard from   
the Lord God of hosts a destruction determined even upon the whole earth. (Isa. 28:21-22)

*Okay, so Israel makes this covenant of peace. Now put your seatbelt on! You are not going to like verse 21 in the natural. I like it in the spirit by faith, but I do not like this in the natural. It just makes my stomach hurt. Verse 21-22 is in the same flow. That is why it is a lament. That is why Isaiah is saying, “I am lamenting. This is woe! I hurt; my stomach, my belly hurts.”*

*I tell you this: this is the real deal. He speaks in verse 21 in context to making the covenant of death. He is still talking to the leaders of Jerusalem. Again, this same conversation is going to be told again. It was 2,700 years ago, but it is “tomorrow’s newspaper.” Not literally tomorrow, but I mean in the days ahead.*

* + 1. ***Mount Perazim***: The Philistines attacked David and Israel’s army at Mount Perazim.   
       God released a sudden, total breakthrough for David (2 Sam. 5:17-20).

*Verse 21, “The Lord will rise up”—in power—“as at Mount Perazim.” At Mount Perazim, the Lord rose up in power with King David. He had a supernatural victory over the enemy.*

* + 1. ***Valley of Gibeon***: David defeated the Philistines by God’s help at the Valley of Gibeon   
       ([1 Chr. 14:13-16](http://biblehub.com/1_chronicles/14-13.htm)). In the Valley of Gibeon, God sent hailstones to help Joshua defeat an Amorite alliance of nations (Josh. 10:10).

*“The Lord will be angry like in the valley of Gibeon.” Same thing, the power of God came and helped King David. Israel won against the enemies. God is going to rise up in the same power that He did in the life of David. He delivered David from the enemies. Isaiah said, “But here is the deal: God is going to be angry like in those days. He is going to do His work. He said, “It is an awesome work,” although the word, awesome, is not probably the best translation. It is a terrible work. It is a work of awe. Not awesome like, “Wow! Cool, dude! Awesome!” Not like that. It is terrifying, like “stop-in-your-tracks awesome” in the negative sense. “He will bring to pass his act.” Isaiah paused, then said, “Yes, God’s unusual act.”*

* + 1. ***Unusual act***: He would come against His own people, scattering them to a distant land in captivity. The work of judgment is called “unusual” since He delights to deliver His people.

*The leaders of Jerusalem who were making this covenant with foreign powers and denying God and casting off His leadership were thinking, “What is this unusual act that He is going to rise up in power like He did in the days of David?”*

*He said, verse 22, “Here it is: do not be mockers. Because if you continue to mock…” Well, they were mocking Isaiah, and Isaiah did not care so much for himself. Isaiah cared more that they were mocking the truth of the prophetic word of the Lord. He went on, “Do not be mockers lest your bonds be made strong. For I have heard from the Lord of hosts; He is determining a destruction upon the whole earth.” He said, “God is going to move in power, and He is going to bring an unusual destruction of the earth.”*

*The unusual act is not that it is global, though that is unusual for sure because that has never happened in that way except for in the days of Noah. It is unusual because what we are going to find out in the next sentence, in a couple sentences, that God says, “I am going to use the power I manifested in David’s ministry in his life, that same glorious supernatural intervention, but I am going to use it* ***against*** *you,* ***not*** *to deliver you.” That is the unusual act.*

*They are looking at Isaiah. They are saying, “What?”*

*God says it is an unusual act because He is going to scatter His people by the hand of the Assyrian invasion, “I am going to scatter.” He already scattered the north, or He was about to. The Assyrian even troubled the south, though it was not to the degree of the north’s trouble. The records say that 200,000 people were displaced in the south. I do not know how true it is, but that is what historical records say. God’s “unusual work” is unusual because God delights to deliver His people. When God talks of an unusual work, He is going to allow His people to be overcome by an evil army.*

* + 1. Isaiah later elaborated on this unusual act referring to it as a marvelous work (29:13-14).

13… “these people…honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me… 14Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom [their plans for safety] of their wise men shall perish…”  
(Isa. 29:13-14)

* 1. This disciplining of His people by the sword of foreigners is an unusual act to God ([Hab. 1:5](http://biblehub.com/habakkuk/1-5.htm)).

5“Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylonians], a bitter and hasty nation…” (Hab. 1:5-6)

*Now in Habakkuk 1—that is the verse here—about 100 years later, Habakkuk says the same thing. He says, God is going to do an unusual thing; you are not going to believe it. He is going to use the Chaldeans or the Babylonians—the Chaldeans and the Babylonians are the same people—He is going to use Babylon, wicked Babylon, to discipline Israel. That is 100 years later with Habakkuk. A hundred years earlier with Isaiah, He was going to use the Assyrians. The Assyrians were the superpower of Isaiah’s day. Babylon is the superpower of Jeremiah or Habakkuk or Joel’s day.*

*The idea is God is going to discipline His own people using the hand of an evil empire. The point in the whole storyline when it unfolds is that God will use the Antichrist to discipline the earth, then destroy the Antichrist. That is the most horrible thought we can have in our natural thinking in terms of God’s leadership. It is very clear that God raises up the Antichrist to allow men to do the evil that they want to do. He gives them liberty to do the evil in their heart. Then He cleanses the planet from evil, but He lets evil have its day first. In the context of letting evil have its freedom—limited freedom, not total freedom, but a lot of freedom—God is using that atmosphere to cause people to choose righteousness in a very hostile environment. The righteousness and the love will go deeper than ever before, so God will produce an end-time harvest and a purified church.*

*He will let the human race go as far into darkness as they want. Then He will drive darkness off the planet and for billions of years. This is the story of the human race. He is giving a little snapshot of this in Isaiah’s day, that God is going to do this unusual work.*

1. parable of the farmer: Jerusalem must accept God’s wisdom (28:23-29)
   1. Isaiah described a farmer who accepts God’s instructions in farming (28:26, 29), instead of rejecting them like the leaders of Ephraim and Judah did. The farmer’s response illustrates that God teaches people how to live (28:26) as well as the different ways that He disciplines His people and the nations (28:27-28). Isaiah advised them to follow the example of the farmer who receives God’s wise instruction.
   2. Isaiah called the scoffers in Jerusalem to listen to God’s message—he used a farmer to illustrate his point (28:23-29). Immediately after Isaiah declared God’s determination to use destruction in various places across the whole earth (28:22), he then called the leaders of Jerusalem be careful to listen. The Lord sent Assyria to destroy Israel, but He will save Jerusalem from the Assyrians, postponing His discipline, because He found a measure of repentance in Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah.

23Give ear and hear my voice, listen…24Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? [No!]. Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? [No!] 25When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cummin and scatter the cummin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place? [Yes!] 26For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him. 27For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; but the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, and the cummin with a rod. 28Bread flour must be ground; therefore he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horsemen. 29This also comes from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance. (Isa. 28:23-29)

* 1. Isaiah described a wise farmer who listened to God’s teachings. The leaders in Jerusalem should follow the example of a wise farmer. God instructs farmers not only on the agricultural processes but also on the different approaches they were to use when threshing the grain (28:26, 29).
  2. The main point is that God teaches His people how to live (28:26) and He uses different approaching (especially when threshing or judging) to help His people fulfill His purposes (28:27). The Lord’s leadership and counsel is wonderful and excellent (28:29).
     1. God’s counsel to the leaders of Jerusalem was to not repeat the sins that the leaders of Israel made (28:1-4) in their drunkenness, spiritual blindness and in depending on political alliances.
     2. God uses different strategies that best apply to the different situation when leading His people. Sometimes He emphasizes promises of blessing and other times warnings of judgment.
  3. Isaiah asked rhetorical questions about a farmer’s work to illustrate how he followed God’s instructions (28:24-26). He asked if a farmer spent all of his time plowing his field? The answer is no. The farmer does not plow for the sake of plowing, but rather to prepare for his intended crop.
     1. In 28:25, he asked if a farmer spent time sowing his seeds? The answer is yes. A farmer plowed his field, then smoothed it out before sowing the seed. Why? Because God taught him these simple principles so that the farmer would have fruitful fields. In overseeing Judah, God’s vineyard, the leaders in Jerusalem should follow the example of the wise farmer.
     2. A farmer follows a wisdom in sowing each different type of seed so that it has the best opportunity to bring forth fruit. It is best to sow some seeds under the ground and yet to sow others seeds on top of it. God taught farmers the differences in sowing different crops.
  4. Isaiah described the different ways that a farmer threshed different grains (28:27-28). A farmer threshes cummin and grain in different ways. This is also wisdom that the Lord teaches. Threshing is often used as a symbol of judgment. Isaiah pointed out the unique way that each kind of seed must be treated. In one case a farmer might strike a plant with a stick, causing the grain to fall to the ground, but other grains required the force of driving a threshing sledge over it.
  5. God uses varying measures of discipline according to the condition of His people or the nations at various times in their history. God’s approach to Judah at that time was different than how He was disciplining Israel.

1. Woe #2—Isaiah’s lament of God’s judgment of Jerusalem (Isa. 29:1-16)

*Now I will be brief on this because it kind of says the same thing over and over. That is, Isaiah 29 is just elaborating on what was said in Isaiah 28.*

* 1. Isaiah predicts a siege of Jerusalem (29:1-14). Here, from 28:18-22, Isaiah continued the theme of God’s judgment on Jerusalem.
  2. Isaiah spoke this woe oracle to Ariel, referring to Jerusalem (29:1) and Mount Zion (29:8). The Hebrew word *Ariel* means the *Lion of God* or the *altar* where sacrifices were burned (Ezek. 43:16). Jerusalem was prophetically called Ariel since she would become like the altar—a scene of burning. This went against their “Zion theology” which presumed that God would never destroy Jerusalem.

1“Woe to Ariel…the city where David dwelt! …2Yet I will distress Ariel; there shall be heaviness and sorrow…3I will encamp against you all around, I will lay siege against you with a mound…” (Isa. 29:1-3)

*“Woe to you, Ariel”—Jerusalem—Woe to you, Ariel, the burning altars in essence is where you are going when the Assyrians come to you. “Yet I will distress Ariel.” Though the Assyrians did not finish off the southern kingdom, a hundred-plus years later Babylon did all of this. What Assyria did in part down in the south, Babylon did in fullness. Nebuchadnezzar came and burned the city to the ground.*

*The Antichrist at the end of the age is never going to succeed in Jerusalem, but he is going to surround Jerusalem, and he is going to attack Jerusalem. He is going to try to set Jerusalem—the people—on fire. He is going to succeed to a degree, but he is going to be stopped. The Lord is going to intervene and overthrow him. Then the glory of God is going to fill the earth. The devil is going to be thrown in prison. It is going to be glorious after that.*

*Let’s go back to the bad news. “Woe to you, Ariel, woe.” This is a declaration that will be a far stronger word in the generation the Lord returns, making what it was in Isaiah’s day almost like an echo. It is the same storyline. I will distress you, Ariel.*

*Verse 2, “There will be heaviness and sorrow.” Now there are other passages, such as God will bring a great harvest in Israel too. There are going to be tremendous miracles and signs and wonders. So one passage highlights the negative; another passage highlights the positive. That is why we have to put it all together.*

*Look at verse 3, this is a bit disturbing. I, the Lord, verse 3, “I will camp around you. I am going to lay a siege around you.”*

*You are thinking, “You? Wait, Jerusalem is Your city! What do You mean, You’re going to lay a military siege around us?”*

*The Lord would say, “I am going to wake you up. I am going to cause you to cry out to Me. I am going to do this: you are going to be brought down to the ground. You are going to be refiguring your entire life; you are going to refigure everything out when your way of rebellion is not going to bring the desired fruit that you wanted to bring.”*

* + 1. It was very offensive to the leaders in Jerusalem to hear Isaiah, who lived in Jerusalem, prophesy of their city being besieged by the God of Israel instead of being protected by Him.
    2. In the end times, the Lord’s messengers will again need to warn the city of Jerusalem that it will be surrounded and besieged by all the nations (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2, Rev. 16:14).

2“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples [nations], when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3And it shall happen…that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone…all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”   
(Zech. 12:2-3)

* 1. Jerusalem’s enemies will be destroyed in an instant (29:5-8). The sudden destruction of Jerusalem’s enemies occurred “in an instant” (29:5). This prophetic word was partially fulfilled in history when God killed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night in 701 BC (Isa. 37:36).

5Moreover the multitude of your foes [enemies] shall be like fine dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones like chaff that passes away; yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly. 6You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire. 7The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel, even all who fight against her…shall be as…8when a hungry man dreams…and his soul is still empty…so the multitude of all the nations…who fight against Mount Zion. (Isa. 29:5-8)

*He went on, “There is the good news. I am going to destroy your enemies too, by the way.” So He said, “I am going to wake you up and discipline you.” Here in verse 5-8, He went on, “I am going to destroy the people who destroy you. The multitude of the nations that come against you, I am going to fight against them. So I am not fighting against you to leave you on your own. I am fighting against you to wake you up. Then I am going to destroy the people that hate you. I really love you.” That is what this is about.*

*Now people who are saying yes to the covenant, this is* ***not*** *how the Lord talks to them. Here is a covenanted nation that is saying, “We do not want anything to do with Jesus. We do not want to do with righteousness. We do not want Your ways. We want to be like the nations. We are going to trust the nations to save us.”*

*The Lord would say, “No, no, no! I love you, Jerusalem. You are the city of the Great King forever. I am going to redeem you. I am not going to force you to love Me. I am going to create a situation where I am going to remove a lot of your options. You are going to choose the spirit of grace and the glory of God. You are going to say yes to Me.”*

* 1. ***The multitude of all the nations***: God will gather all nations to fight Jerusalem (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2, Rev. 16:14). Then He will destroy those nations whom He used to discipline Israel.

1Behold, the day of the Lord…2I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken…half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3Then the Lord will…fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle…5Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You. (Zech. 14:1-5)

* 1. ***Punished by earthquake and storm***: The terrible army (29:5) against Israel will be destroyed. Isaiah addressed them directly as if he saw them before him—sudden transitions like this are not uncommon within Isaiah. The destruction of the Antichrist’s army fulfills the details in 29:6 (Ezek. 38:18-23).

18“…when Gog [Antichrist] comes against…Israel…19there shall be a great earthquake …   
22I will rain down on him…flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.” (Ezek. 38:18-22)

* 1. ***In an instant***: The Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem was supernaturally destroyed when the angel of Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36). Jesus will easily and quickly kill the Antichrist and his armies what will be gathered around Jerusalem (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:19-21).

36The angel of the Lord…killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose…in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. (Isa. 37:36)

1. the spiritual blindness of Jerusalem’s leaders (29:9-14)
   1. The leaders of Jerusalem were spiritually blind (29:9-14). Because they refused to respond to God’s promises and trust Him in a time of trouble, God hardened their hearts with spiritual blindness.

9…Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine…10The Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. 11The whole vision has become to you like…a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one…saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” …13Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people…honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men 14…I will do a marvelous work among this people… the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.” (Isa. 29:9-14)

* 1. ***Blind yourselves***: Isaiah spoke sarcastically in telling them to blind themselves (28:9). Their bad choices resulted in losing spiritual understanding and developing a twisted view of reality that prevented them from receiving spiritual understanding. God hardened their heart, pouring on them a “deep sleep” of spiritually blindness (6:9-10). He “sealed” His truth from them by blinding their eyes. God gave each person a free will; thus, they can choose to refuse His leadership, resulting in spiritual blindness.
  2. ***Closed your eyes***: Their “professional prophets” did not have insight into what was coming.
  3. ***Sealed***: God hides His plans from those who refused to honor Him. The Lord blinded the prophets, making prophetic revelation “like” a sealed or closed book (29:9). They were even unable to grasp important aspects of Isaiah’s prophecies or to see their plain meaning.
  4. ***Removed their hearts far from Me***: They were diligent to embrace religious rituals, but their heart was far from engaging in a real relationship with God (Mt. 15:9). They focused on keeping the commands or religious rituals that they had added to the real and important commandments that God had given them.
  5. ***Marvel***: God judged them with spiritual blindness. This caused others to “**marvel**”**—**that the men whom they considered wise were unable to grasp God’s intentions in His word and in prophetic revelation. For example, the king’s advisors made wrong political alliances seeking to save them from Assyria.

1. Woe #3—Isaiah’s lament over Jerusalem’s refusal of God (29:15-16)
   1. Isaiah lamented that the leaders of Jerusalem made plans without consulting God (29:15-16). He pointed out their determination to make their political plans in secret hoping to “hide” them from God.

15Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; they say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?” 16Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; for shall the thing made say of him who made it, “He did not make me”? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”? (Isa. 29:15-16)

* 1. ***Things turned upside down***: The result was that their thinking became very distorted.
  2. ***Potter***: The royal counselors were but clay, so why did they insist on questioning the sovereign Lord who is the potter? God had already revealed that He would destroy the Assyrians (29:5-6). They denied God’s sovereign power and plan, seeing themselves as having the power and wisdom to maneuver politically to avoid the trouble that the Assyrians might bring. God formed man out of clay (Gen 2:7), so men of clay should never challenge God’s sovereign plans which are powerful and wise.

1. The restoration and salvation of Israel (Isa. 29:17-24)
   1. Jacob, or all Israel, will trust, love, and fear the Lord when Jesus returns (29:17-24). The Lord will openly show His sovereignty as the potter (29:16) by restoring the spiritual, physical, and social conditions of Israel and the nations. This will promise will occur in fullness in the Millennium.
   2. The Lord will heal the land and the people of Israel (29:17-19).

17Is it not yet a very little while till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest? 18In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. 19The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. (Isa. 29:17-19)

*Well, we will end with this. “In that day,” here is how the story of Isaiah 28-29 ends. “In that day,” verse 18, “the deaf will hear, and the blind eyes will open.” This is spiritually. Israel’s blinders will be lifted and thousands will come to salvation. Thousands and millions will come to salvation. It is not only blind eyes and deaf ears spiritually, but there will be healings. There are quite a few passages speaking of tremendous healings of blind eyes and deaf ears, and paralytics walking, etc., related to the generation the Lord returns.*

*Verse 19, God could say, “My plan works. I promise you the humble will increase in joy. Their joy will be in their relationship to Yeshua, to Jesus. Their joy will not be in their superiority over other nations.”*

* + 1. ***A very little while***: This phrase in 28:17 and “in that day” in 28:18 are usually used in relationship to the end of the age and the millennial kingdom.
    2. ***Lebanon***:The Lord will transform nature, including making Lebanon a fruitful field (32:15). The fruitfulness of the land of Israel is an important aspect of prophetic Scriptures (Isa. 30:23; 35:1-2, 6-7; Ezek. 34:26-29; 47:6-12; Hos. 2:21-22; Joel 2:21-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13). After Jesus returns to Jerusalem, the land of Israel will be like the garden of Eden (Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 34:29; 36:35).
    3. ***The deaf shall hear***: The deaf will hear, and the blind will see (29:18). This speaks of both spiritual and physical healing of the deaf and blind. This reverses the spiritual blindness described in 29:9-12. The spiritually blind nation of Israel (6:9-10; 28:12; 29:9-12; 30:9) will love and obey Jesus.
    4. ***Joy***: Jesus’ leadership will cause the formerly-oppressed Jewish people to walk in joy (29:19).
  1. The terrible one—the Antichrist—will be destroyed and sinful leaders removed (Isa. 29:20-21).

20For the terrible one is brought to nothing, the scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off—21who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just by empty words. (Isa. 29:20-21)

*Verse 20, “For the terrible one”—the Antichrist at the end of the age, but the terrible one would have been the Assyrian in Isaiah’s generation. Then a hundred years later it would have been Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian in Jeremiah’s generation. “The terrible one will be brought to nothing.”*

* + 1. ***The terrible one***: Israel’s salvation occurs in context to Jesus destroying the Antichrist.
    2. ***All who watch for iniquity***: Those who watch or look for ways to express their sinful ways will be cut off or removed (29:20). Isaiah described false witnesses accusing innocent people in legal battles and the corrupt lawyers, judges, and the legal systems under their control (29:21).
  1. Israel will be transformed (29:22-24). They will relate to and acknowledge God as the Most High.

22Therefore thus says the Lord… “Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale; 23but when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel. 24These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine.” (Isa. 29:22-24)

*He could say, “It works, My plan does.” Verse 22, “Jacob will no longer be ashamed.” Jacob means Israel. “When he sees his children, it will be the work of My hand.” That is, “You may criticize Me, Israel, for My leadership and the way I am orchestrating it, but when the picture comes to fullness, you will see the work of My hand: that your people will hallow My name. The nation of Israel will be saved. They will fear the name of the Lord and it will be filled with joy. We will live together forever in love, so that is the plan.”*

* + 1. ***Jacob***: This speaks of all the tribes of Israel—those in the north and south.
    2. ***They will never be ashamed***: They will never rebel against God again nor be defeated by their enemies that caused their face to grow pale.
    3. ***His children***: The children of Israel shall live holy lives and walk in the fear of God (29:23).
    4. ***Hallow My name***: They will receive true understanding of who the Lord is and who they are to Him (29:24). This will be a total reversal of their current state of rebellion and spiritual blindness. They will see God’s kindness and goodness to them as a nation. Thus, they will joyfully respond to His leadership instead of rebelling and complaining against Him.

*Amen! Let’s stand before the Lord.*

*Lord, we want to get this. We do not want to go on some fairy-ride, bunny trail of fantasy about the future. We want to be girded with clarity and insight, with our heart set on love and moving in the power of God so we know what is going on as these things unfold in the decades ahead. Father, here we are before You. Father, we say yes to You. Yes, Lord. Father, we say yes to You. We say we want understanding. We do not want to act hastily. Lord, even in this day we do not want to act hastily as things emerge in the negative.*