

ISAIAH 28

A Precious Cornerstone in Zion

Two Crowns

1 Ah, the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, and the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord (יְהוָה) has one who is mighty and strong. Like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand. 3 The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden underfoot. 4 And the fading flower of its glorious beauty that is on the head of the rich valley will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer. When someone sees it, he swallows it as soon as it is in his hand. 5 In that day Yahweh of hosts will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of his people, 6 a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

Precept upon Precept

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

9 To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? 10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.

11 For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue Yahweh will speak to this people 12 to whom he has said,

This is rest (מְנוּחָה)—give rest (נוּחַ) to the weary—and this is repose.

Yet they would not hear. 13 And the word of Yahweh will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, fall backward, be broken, snared, and taken.

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14 Therefore hear the word of Yahweh, you scoffers (לְצַוֵּן) who rule this people in Jerusalem! 15 Because you have said,

We have made a covenant (בְּרִית) with death (מָוֶת), and with Sheol (שְׁאוֹל) we have an agreement (הֶחֱזַק), when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter.¹

16 Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh,

Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:

Whoever believes will not be in haste.

17 And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line. And hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter.

Strange Is Yahweh's Work

18 Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. 19 As often as it passes through it will take you. For morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night. And it will be sheer terror to understand the message. 20 For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in. 21 For Yahweh will rise up as on Mount Perazim. As in the Valley of Gibeon he will be roused, to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work! 22 Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong. For I have heard a decree of destruction from Lord Yahweh of hosts against the whole land.

Farming Dill, Cumin, Wheat, Barley, and Emmer

23 Give ear, and hear my voice. Give attention, and hear my speech. 24 Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continually open and harrow his ground? 25 When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows, barley in its proper place, and emmer as the border? 26 For he is rightly instructed. His God teaches him. 27 Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin. But dill is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod. 28 Does one crush grain for bread? No, he does not thresh it forever. When he drives his cart wheel over it with his horses, he does not crush it. 29 This also comes from Yahweh of hosts. He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.

¹ Judah's leaders believe they have insulated themselves from God's judgment.

Notes