

“In That Day, God Crowns the Remnants and Judges False Priests and Prophets”

Scripture: Isaiah 28:1-10 (vss. 5-6)

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. Historical Background

God’s vision for humanity is always focused on salvation for his people. We are to believe as godly people that “in that day the Lord Almighty” will be that the crowning wreath or garland around the neck of the remnant (a small remaining few) who are found to be righteous and just and a source of strength will be those who are always doing HIS will. Biblical scholars indicate that, these 66 books in Isaiah are predominantly in two parts (Chapters 1-39) which tell of God’s approaching judgment and how people will be punished because of their sin, rebellion, and worship of false gods. This is mixed with beautiful poems of comfort and promise. The second half of Isaiah chapters 40-66 is filled with prophecies of comfort for the nation of Judah and this entire section is written to comfort God’s people in the midst of their suffering after His judgment has fallen (40:1-2). After God’s judgement the people will be restored in God’s plan of salvation for the world.

We are to prep ourselves as a people of God to hear the word of God that is inclusive of condemnation and warnings which chapters 1-35 constantly and persistently remind us about. This book of Isaiah closes with a beautiful description of the glorious age to come where there will be restoration as we worship Him in His majesty and glory. Peace and justice will reign, and God will make all things new. We are a covenant people, and God has a divine way of having us get a glimmer of hope. The Historical setting would have us to see that this time of Isaiah was a time of great moral and political upheaval. Even then, as it is now God is calling us to study/mediate/pray/hope to see how we are to put our trust in God, who alone could bring real salvation and offer lasting protection for the perilous times.

God’s desire is for us to see how this Prophet Isaiah presents insights into the nature of God. First of all He is a holy God which reminds us of our sins and weakness, this we must confess so that we as a covenant people can be cleansed to proclaim God’s message of repentance and judgment to a wayward people. God is interested in the **salvation** of his people (mentioned 28 times in this book). **Salvation is of God, not man.** God is the sovereign ruler of history and the only one who has the power to save. The prophet, preacher, teacher, no matter what your spiritual gifts- are the ones being used of God – messengers sent and used of **God – who saves; the messenger delivers the Message**-which is humbling to us

as servants of the Lord Almighty. Also, no other book contains as many references to the coming Messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as this book. His purpose was “to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord: (Luke 4:18-19).

B. Biblical Context

It was made very clear in last week’s lesson that the way God made the provision to deal with sin without destroying the sinful person(s) is by providing a “method of payment” by atonement. There has to be a sacrifice to that God’s judgement and righteousness may prevail. Wrongs has to be righted. Lies had to be addressed by the truth. The whole Bible is about salvation which is inclusive of redemption, restoration and healing.

God is so holy, that after Isaiah’s confession, the prophet’s lips said (Isa. 6:1-8— “Woe is me,” he cried, “for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips”. After this confession, Isaiah’s lips were cleansed by a live coal from the altar, and he agreed to proclaim God’s message of repentance and judgment to a wayward people. He was entrusted with the Word of God as he trusted God in prophesizing these 66 books (Hebrews 4:12 - symbolically likened to a sword). The Word of God in today’s lesson warns us as his people – of woes to those who are the called to take the Message of the Cross, the drunkards and the remnants. In that day, God crowns the remnants and judge false priests and prophets! Woe be to you, if you wear a crown of pride, blessed are you if you wear a crown of glory! What are you wearing? Woe is used expressively all over the Bible – woe to those at ease, pastors, scribes, the rich, to you that laugh, woe me if I preach not the Word of God.

II. THE LESSON: IN THAT DAY, GOD CROWNS THE REMNANTS AND JUDGES FALSE PRIESTS AND PROPHETS!

1. v. 1. THE WREATH OF WARNING. Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim’s drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley—to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine!

Chapter 28 opens to the word- “woe”. This word “woe” is defined as grief, sorrow, a miserable or sorrowful state. There are 19 ‘woes’ in the Book of Isaiah, and 7 in Isaiah 28. Here in the lesson today our attention is called to the seven woes in Chapters 28 to 33: Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim (28:1)2) Woe to Judah (28:7; 3) Woe deceivers; Woe to Jerusalem (29:1); Woe to deceivers and hypocrites (28)Woe to the rebellious children (30:1) Woe to them that trust in Egypt(31:1)Woe to the treacherous dealers (33:1)

A closer observation is that here are 2 woe things cursed **1) woe to the crown of pride**-Samaria(proud/haughty) and **2) woe to the drunkards** of Ephraim-the 10-tribe or Northern kingdom of Israel. In that day Ephraim and Samaria are

destroyed by Assyria, which was within a few months after the prophecy was uttered. Ephraim was to be destroyed and go into captivity, but Judah was to become the remnant of Israel and be spared. God is the crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the rest of Israel who were not defeated and taken captive to Assyria. God was to be their protector when the Assyrians would come into the land.

This is a warning to all drunken political/religious leaders for debunking God's true prophets giving a message of judgment!

2. vv. 2-4. WHAT CROWN WILL YOU WEAR? A Crown of Pride? See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, He will throw it forcefully to the ground. ³ That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, will be trampled underfoot.⁴ That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like figs ripe before harvest— as soon as people see them and take them in hand, they swallow them.

Often prophecy as only God can give us through a vision since we can't get it no other way. In these verses it describes to us how to use our sanctified spiritual imagination as a metaphor, symbolic of sin/ungodly ways have overtaken our lives. Ephraim was once a beauty but because of its sin, its glorious beauty is now like a fading flower; overcome with the wine like drunkards; destroyed because of pride, trodden down. Woe it is to those because of the sins of disobedience. They now have a crown of pride-now it is trodden under the feet-wearing a crown of pride. (Sins: Proud/haughty/drunks-a person's reason, conscience, moral feelings, and physical strength are all overcome or subdued by strong drink)/pride/hasty/deceivers/hypocrites/rebellious/treacherous/revelry/seemingly secure). God is powerful/strong like a hailstorm, destructive wind, driving rain and a flooding downpour!!

A Crown of Beauty? As compared to Samaria, which was built on a hill surrounded by a rich valley about 8 miles in diameter. Beyond the valley it was surrounded by hills which were cultivated in terraces, sown with grain and planted in figs and olive gardens, now wearing a crown of beauty. Oh, what glorious beauty under the protection of the Lord, mighty and strong does not reward disobedience. The challenge is to see which crown you are wearing.

3. vv. 5-6. THE REMNANT. In that day the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. ⁶ He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

"In that day the Lord of Hosts" will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty to the "residue" of his people. But we don't know the day or the hour, nevertheless, in the meantime, hold on! God's spirit of judgment will be judged on

that part of the community or nation that remains after a dreadful judgment or devastating calamity, especially for those that survive and rest solely on God's providential care for His chosen people and His faithfulness to keep his promises. The roots of this lies in the Book of Deuteronomy (4:27-31; 28:62-68; 30:1-10). Hold on until "that day" comes first or you die first!

The concept is that out of obedience, God will bring you out of captivity, those chosen by God who were rescued from impending doom. They suffered, we suffered; at the same time, they serve God and stood as witnesses, calling for repentance and witnessing his miraculous power. God's purpose is seen in the remnant and applied it to the church (Rom. 11:5) - Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, find their true spiritual home when they believe in Christ.

4. vv. 7-8. ARE YOU STAGGERING? And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. ⁸ All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth.

No one is exempt – not even the priests and prophets! This is inclusive, not exclusive. All have fallen short of the glory of God. Get ready, get ready to get right with God. Not one servant of the Lord has it all to perfection. All have staggered! Reeling! Stumbling! But get up, commit, devout, and strong. 'All' have vomited in their filth of sinful and unclean living in corruption. There are always some that after accepting the gospel will reject Christ. But Christ is the Stumbling Stone and later crushed by this Stone.

5. vv. 9-10. THE LORD IS SPEAKING. Who is it he is trying to teach? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk to those just taken from the breast? ¹⁰ For it is: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that^[a]; a little here, a little there."

This chapter is an invitation to NOT go wayward in the wrong direction. Yes, the teaching, rules, a little here, a little there, precept by precept, the commandment; all are set in order. No matter your position in leadership, or servanthood, we are all a representative of the Most High God. All have erred in truth, in judgment and in the way of right, all destined to be corrected.

III. CONCLUSION. Be clear that the Lord of Hosts will/can empower us to wear the crown of glory. Listen to the Lord's message, don't brag on self! The Lord is trying to teach his people, a command, a rule, a lesson.