

The Book of Isaiah
Chapter 28-35

Summary:

- Lessons on trust continue but will come to a close next week with chapters 36-39
- Since Isaiah 7 we've been given a contrast between trusting God, the Sovereign King or trusting the nations—instruments of God's hand
- God will judge the nations, so trust me
- Nations come and go, but I remain FOREVER
- We trust changing circumstances and people instead of a never-changing God

Today

- Chapters 28-35 continue our lessons on trust
- Chapters 13-23 established God's sovereignty over the nations in a particular sense, 24-27 in general
- Will return to particular situations in Israel and Judah that will state the folly of trusting nations (28-33) instead of a king who has been revealing self through prophet

Message: God's word CAN be trusted, humans must not be!

I. The Historical Backdrop of Isaiah (28-35)

- A. Date—likely between 730-705 BC (end of Ahaz—beginning of Hezekiah's reign).
Probably before 722 BC
- B. Specific historical events at this time
 - 1. Damascus (capital of Aram) was destroyed by Assyria in 732 BC

So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin. 2 Kings 16:9 NKJV

- 2. Israel trusted in Assyria—tribute for life and protection (Hoshea of Israel)

Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. 2 Kings 17:3 NKJV

3. Israel/Assyrian alliance was compromised

And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. 2 Kings 17:4 NKJV

4. Israel's days numbered—captured by Assyria in 722 BC

Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 2 Kings 17:5-6 NKJV

5. Judah, realizing Israel was going to fall to Assyria—worthless alliance—saw Egypt as their only human hope.

C. Isaiah's message will emerge from this context

1. Trust placed in another nation—foolish (Isaiah 28:14-15)
2. Foolish trust—only human (Isaiah 31:3)
3. Trust the Sovereign King

TODAY: God's message to Israel and Judah spoken through Isaiah—folly of trusting nations

II. Pronouncement Against Israel (28:1-13)

A. Destruction is imminent for Israel (28:1-4)

1. "Woe" speaks of judgment and destruction (29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1, 33:1)
2. Pride of Israel "crown of pride" is their downfall
3. Lord will use his instrument (Assyria) to bring down and snatch up Israel

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18 NKJV

B. The promise of a new day: Messianic Kingdom (28:5-6)

TRUTH:

1. While the Lord brings punishment, He never goes back on His Word to preserve His people.
 2. Who is the True King: drunken political leaders who will fall or the Lord Almighty—Trust Him
 3. God will humble the prideful—individual and America
- C. Israel's lack of character and failure to heed God's Word will bring judgment (28:7-13)

1. Priests and prophets engage in self-pleasure and fail to provide sound judgment (7-8)
2. Mock and reject the simplicity of the message (9-10)
3. They will learn truth through hard experience (11-13)

TRUTH: Have we not exchanged the simple message of the Gospel for a self-centered, worldly gospel?

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. Galatians 1:6-7 NKJV

III. A Message to Leaders in Jerusalem (28:14-29)

A. Learn from your neighbors to the north (14)

1. “Therefore” in light of what I have just said
2. Judgment imminent for north
3. Judgment possible for south if they continue in their ways

B. Judah’s death-covenant (15)

1. Likely with Egypt
2. Convinced this bond will preserve them from “scourge”—Assyria
3. Believed a lie—human power is better means of protection than God’s power

NOTE: Americans place greater trust in political and national powers than Sovereign King”

C. God’s response to their covenant (16-19)

TRUTH

1. He alone (tested stone) is worthy of trust

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 1 Peter 2:6-8 NKJV

2. Human powers are worthless and can’t be trusted
3. Leaders should look unto God for help

READ: Psalm 121

D. Isaiah's reflection on God's Word (20-22)

1. Egyptian alliance is useless when God is at work
2. Don't fear Assyria, fear the Lord—His work
3. Judgment on His own is necessary for cleansing
4. Quit mocking and listen to Word

NOTE: Fear for a culture that mocks and rejects the Word

E. A lesson from agriculture (23-29)

1. God can be trusted
2. Humans cannot
3. Why can't you understand this spiritual principle?

IV. An Oracle Against Jerusalem (29:1-14)

- A. Judgment (1-4) from God: Woe #2 (see Lamentations 1)
- B. Hope is available (5-8)
- C. Judgment (9-14)

TRUTHS:

1. Apart from genuine repentance, judgment is the inescapable route to hope
2. National identity doesn't give us special status and immunity, but hearts devoted to God give us hope (see Matthew 15:8-9)
3. God longs for more than just lip-service—He wants submitted hearts

*Lots of professing Christians but very few confessing Christians (nominal Christianity)

V. Oracle Against Worldly Thinking (29:15-24)

A. Exposing worldly attitudes (15-16)

1. Attempting to hide their counsel (alliance with Egypt) from God: Woe #3
2. Have not sought counsel of God (Saul and David)
3. Confused reasoning (v. 16)
 - Deny Lord's distinctiveness (potter=clay)
 - Deny Lord's sovereignty (He did not make me)
 - Deny Lord's wisdom (He knows nothing)

NOTE: Recall Isaiah's vision (Chapter 6) we must not reject the nature and character of God

B. The Coming of the World Renewal (17-21)

1. Illustrated (17)
2. Applied: Individually (18), Spiritually (19), Socially (20-21)

C. The changed fortune of Jacob (22-24)

1. In principle (22a)—ancient purposes fulfilled
2. In effect: Jacob recovered (22 bc), God acknowledged (23), individuals transformed (24)

“Covenant language”

VI. Human Faithlessness and the Faithfulness of God (30:1-33)

THEMES:

1. Trust God
2. Judgment for those who trust humans
3. Hope for those who turn back

A. Foolishness of trusting Egypt (1-7): Woe #4

B. Prediction of Judah’s Devastation (8-18)

1. Attitude (8-11)—Read 9, 11
2. Announcement of judgment (12-14)
3. Invitation (15), refusal of invitation and results (16-18)

TRUTH: God patiently waits for His foolish people to return (18)—cf. Jonah and Ninevah

C. Promise of redemption and restoration for His people (19-33)

1. Spiritual Regeneration (19-22)

“Cry” reminiscent of Israel crying out in Egypt for deliverance

2. Physical blessings poured out (23-26)
3. Defeat for all enemies—Assyria (27-33)

NOTE: Vs. 31

Reflection:

1. Where do I place my trust? In institutions, in governments, in military, or God?
2. Am I trying to have my way or God’s way?

3. Do I recognize the “Already and Not Yet” aspect of God’s Kingdom?

VII. Trust Nations or God (31:1-9)

- A. Trusting in Egypt is completely useless (31:1-3) Woe #5
- B. Trust in God, your only hope of deliverance (31:4-9)
 - 1. God will defend Jerusalem (4-5)
 - 2. Turn back to him—away from idols (6-7)
 - 3. Assyria is not match for Lord (8-9)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

SUMMARY:

- 28-29 (False leaders)
- 30-31 (False counsel)
- 32-33 (True leader)

VIII. A True Leader and His Reign (32:1-33:24)

NOTE: The passing of the earthly king (31:8-9) gives way to the reign of the true king

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice. Isaiah 32:1 NKJV

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. Isaiah 9:1 NKJV

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. Isaiah 11:1 NKJV

- We must constantly keep our eyes fixed on God’s ultimate plan for His creation to balance the chaos of the moment

A. A New King and New Society (32:1-8)

- 1. True values: righteousness and justice (1) (Messianic Overtone)

Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Psalms 97:2 NKJV

2. True rule: completeness, protection, provision, refreshment (2)
3. New people (3-4)—embrace of truth
 - a. Note contrast with Isaiah 6:9-10
 - b. Note undoing of 29:9-13
4. End of false values (5)
5. New values (6-8)
 - a. The ways of a fool (5)

NOTE: “Fool” in scripture speaks of someone who consciously rejects God’s word, God, and his ways (Psalms 14:1); accountable to no one but self.

- b. The ways of a scoundrel (rogue)—(6)
- c. The way of the noble (8)

“They have learned that the gracious God can be trusted to supply their needs, and thus they no longer need to be grasping but can become giving.” (John Oswalt)

B. The Necessity of the Spirit (32:9-20)

1. Warning against complacency and false security (9-14)

TRUTH: Even though all the false trusts will have failed, God has not failed.

2. The promise of the Spirit (15-20)
 - a. Spirit will bring true productivity and security
 - b. Submission to the Lord allows the Spirit to bring peace, rest, and trust (v. 18)

C. Only the TRUE King can be trusted to deliver (33:1-16)

1. “Woe” #6 directed toward Jerusalem’s enemies—likely Assyria (1)
2. Appeal to God (2)
3. Based on character and power (3-6)
4. The hopelessness of the situation (7-9)
5. The promise of divine action

D. Awaited gracious promise (33:2) revealed (33:17-24)

How was or is this promised fulfilled for God’s people?

1. Hezekiah—trusted God and experienced deliverance

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2. Delivered from Babylonian captivity and restored to land
3. Revelation of Messiah in Jesus
4. Future ruling of Messiah on earth

SEE: 33:22

What does our King—the Christ—offer to us today?

1. Security (18-20)
2. Deliverance (22)
3. Health in most comprehensive form (24)

NOTE: This is what we receive when the King rules our hearts and life

IX. The Fate of Misplaced Trust (34:1-17)

- A. General announcement of judgment on earth (1-4) or entire cosmos

*All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.
Isaiah 34:4 NKJV*

- B. Edom as a representative of the nations being judged (5-17)

SEE: Numbers 20:18-21 (opposed God's plan)

1. Bloody Destruction (5-8)
2. Edom becomes a desert (9-17)
 - a. Territory largely desert
 - b. Language of vv. 9-10 reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)
 - c. Home of all unclean birds and animals (11-15)

TRUTH: Trust placed in anyone or anywhere other than God will result in a desert-like emptiness

How can we discern where our trust lies?

As a church...

- Am I trusting in large budgets, impressive facilities, and powerful preaching (Nation)
- Have we given focus to prayer (God)

As an individual...

- Have I been trusting humanity for only what God can give or do? (relationship, provision)

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X. The Destiny of Trusting God (35:1-10)

- A. Transformation happens (1, 7)
- B. Restoration is possible (2, see 33:9)
- C. Spiritual results (3-6, 8)

Conclusion:

And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15 NKJV