

Precept Upon Precept; Line Upon Line

Isaiah 28:5 – 29:8

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~ Our last report from our Spiritual Safari ended in the beginning an entirely new section of Isaiah. Chapter twenty-eight is where we leave the past behind, and enjoy the present together as we peer into the far distant future with a genuine prophet of God. Isaiah reveals and demonstrates the marvelous way the present illustrates the future. Fulfilled prophecy suddenly begins to define that which is to come. That makes for some seriously difficult Bible study, my beloved readers. This is where sober discourse is essential. Plenary comprehension of this section of Scripture requires prayer, reading the text, praying again, and more reading of related passages. Of course, the Word of God has a past, a present and a future; and a proper, correct and complete understanding of the delineation of time, who is speaking to whom, who is speaking about what, what is being spoken of, and at what time for what reason, are all critical factors in rightly dividing Scripture. I see so many people who have *no earthly idea* of these divisions around this forum on which I teach – and, troublingly, they always seem to somehow think they are Bible masters. Well, all I can do is bow my head and laugh at those people as I pray for them to actually receive a desire from the Lord Jesus Christ to draw them into a sincere, educated, systematic, proper, correct, complete, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Bible study. If you have not read our last several safari reports then I suggest you go back and do so now....

XXVIII

5 IN THAT DAY shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

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

7 But Ephraim also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong

drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

~ As we have learned in previous reports, “*IN THAT DAY*” is a technical expression that all of the prophets use to describe the future coming of “*the Day of the Lord*” – which begins with the rapture of the church, includes the Great Tribulation period, and runs through the Millennial Kingdom. We have also learned that Ephraim is another name the prophet’s use for the northern kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel. One of the reasons the northern kingdom of Ephraim was undone was because they wore the crown of pride. So, we’re beginning to see a pattern in God’s judgment; and the common denominator of all nations being judged comes back to pride. However, in that future day, when God brings Israel back into the land according to prophecy, they will wear a crown of glory — His crown — and that will be their glory.

In the day in which we are studying, the prophet and the priest both erred by being drunk. Their discernment was distorted and their judgment clouded by alcohol. Today, we have a bunch of spiritual drunks. Those are people who never study the Bible. They just dream it all up and – voila! – they think they have a message of revelation from God Almighty for the world! Unfortunately, they are the biggest fools and hypocrites on the planet earth; and their pride is sickening. Today, when you indulge in sin, and drink heavily, you will never come to a fruitful understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Word of God – because that would be impossible. If you are a businessperson, you will also lose your sharp business acumen; it simply cannot be otherwise. God says drunkenness and pride are what brought the nation Israel down – and, today, those nations that surrounded Israel are as down as down can be – if they are even still in existence....

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

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

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

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

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

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

~ This particular section of Scripture is what led the great Spirit-filled and Spirit-led theologians and Bible expositors of yesteryear to label Isaiah the “*prophet of the common place man.*” That definition could not fit more succinctly or be any truer in articulation. Verses ten and thirteen are remarkable statements that our Spiritual Safari is going to bear down on so hard now, the pencil lead might snap and break. There are multitudes of so-called Christians today that, generally speaking, have some sort of spiritual sinful hang up. It’s usually pride – and they’ll always accuse *YOU* of being proud. If they would be honest – which they seldom are – they would admit that they are not satisfied with their Christian life in any way, shape or form. It’s all nothing but a meaningless ritual and, actually, Christ is just a bothersome burden to them. I’ll admit I have no qualms being utterly blunt and calling them what they are: counterfeit and carnal Christians. I add “*Christians*” loosely to the label, for their benefit of my doubt.

Well, along comes some small-minded, quasi-biblical course that claims to teach you the Bible in a few days or weeks, and promises to give the solution and answer to each and every Bible question; from being an ideal friend, to being a better spouse, to making their marriage perfect, to getting a raise and being the best employee at their job — to you name it. Those courses actually promise to make people star’s in their own universe! So, let me say this very candidly – because some are greatly disappointed by your experience with God, and it has left you bitter – and I know this,

because I've had that experience: there is no shortcut to having the Spirit of God developing our Christian life. It is a process; a painful process. There is no easy way to learn the Word of God. Wikipedia is *NOT* academia. YouTube is mainly for mouth-breathing babies and abject fools. That which the Lord Jesus Christ gives is not an easy-chair leather recliner in the living room of life where all the answers are displayed on-demand on a screen, friends. It never has been that; and it never will be that.

The only way in the world that you are ever going to grow in the perfect mind of Christ of understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and a correct perspective of life, is exactly how Isaiah says it happens in verses ten and thirteen. It is so commonplace and so mundanely ho-hum ordinary that I almost hesitate to say this; but, the Word of the Lord came to them precept upon precept – line upon line. It's really a daily grind to get into the Word of God. For years I had to literally force myself to continue Bible study. It's easy to stop studying the Bible. It's even easier to neglect it altogether. Most people never follow through and, as a result, they are in a constant backslidden condition. They have chronic health problems, dire financial difficulties and just plain persistent problems in all areas of their life. They aren't particularly weaker than anyone else – they just don't spend enough time in the Word of God.

Now, I recognize that this so-called Spiritual Safari isn't sexy prose or exciting literature. It's just old corn, friends – nothing else. By contrast, if I were to announce on this forum on which I teach that I had published a little book that would take only thirty minutes to read, and would give you all the answers to every question in your Christian life, I can guarantee you I would have over one thousand orders the very first day. I would see friends that *NEVER* read this safari come out of nowhere and place an order. This Bible teaching that goes through the entire Bible just isn't very exciting. I knew that before I began teaching this way. Well, that's what it takes, precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line. That's the only way you're ever going to get a right understanding of the Word of God, my beloved – you might want to make a note about that....

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

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

~ The warning God gave to Israel in the north should have been a warning to Judah in the south – which should be a warning to you and me today – because the Word of God is the *O-N-L-Y* way the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to any of us in this present hour. It would seem to me as if God didn't write this book yesterday; but tomorrow! That's exactly how up-to-date it really is. In fact, it's even ahead of a billion tomorrows! The covenant with death and with hell is explained by Daniel in his prophecy when these people make a pact with the prince that's coming – and his name is antichrist. That is the godless man of sin – the willful king. Satan's man is the beast out of the sea as well as the beast out of the land. It's an ugly dark picture Isaiah is painting now – and it's going to get worse – much, much worse....

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

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

~ Our only protection against the greed, lies, fraud, deception, and murder that plague society — problems that will persist and worsen as the Great Tribulation period progresses — is to have a firm foundation in the Word of God and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ. Our foundation is a perfectly square and precious corner stone. If you are building on that cornerstone, which the natural man building in and of the world rejects, then you don't need to be in a hurry today. Our stone and foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our recourse and resource in this sick, lost world. We are to rest in Him. Peter said, "... wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, *Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but*

unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed....” Peter doesn’t play games – so our safari doesn’t play games, either. Get your thinking straight with God, friends. Peter makes this point clear; at least, it should be succinctly clear to you now....

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

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

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

~ For the people of Ephraim, judgment was gradual – like outgrowing a bed. Today, judgment sometimes comes suddenly – but almost always it is very subtle and slow. By the time we realize judgment is upon us, it’s like a bed that is suddenly too short to sleep in, and the blanket isn’t quite big enough anymore. You have to either lay sideways, or at an angle on the bed, and it isn’t comfortable. If you pull the blanket up to your chin, your feet hang out! If you cover your feet, then it is too short to fully cover the chest. Gradual judgment is *TEN TIMES* worse than sudden judgment. In ancient days, if you were an enemy of the king, and they told you they were going to have mercy, that meant they were going to kill you quickly – as opposed to putting you on the wheel in the torture chamber and dragging out your demise for several days or longer. It’s a frightful picture Isaiah is painting for us, friends – make no mistake – this is no joke. This is what’s real. This is the Word of God. Figure it out, and stop playing church, my beloved....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

XXIX

1 Woe to Jerusalem, to Jerusalem, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

2 Yet I will distress Jerusalem, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munitions and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

8 It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion ~

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