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ISAIAH 28

(The following sermon was given by Brother V.T. Houteff March 6, 1943.)

We shall spend our allotted time today studying the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah.

Isa. 28:1 -- "Woe to the crown of pride to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine."

The drunkards in this verse are identified as Ephraimites. The kingdom of Ephraim is known as that division of Israel which was made up originally of the ten tribes and was called the house or kingdom of Israel.

Isa. 28:2-4 -- "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: and the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up."

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These verses portray the downfall of Ephraim which comes as a result of their sins.

Isa. 28:5 -- "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."

Another class of people is brought to view in this verse; namely, the residue of His people. There are, then, the Ephraimites mentioned in Isa. 28:1 and also the residue of His people mentioned in Isa. 28:7.

In the time of the reign of Solomon's son, you recall, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. Ephraim, or the kingdom of Israel, being composed of ten tribes, was the main body or division. The "residue" was the house or kingdom of Judah and was made up of the two remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin. After the kingdom of Israel was divided into these two kingdoms the tribes in each intermingled, thus causing each kingdom to have within it people from all the twelve tribes. The two kingdoms, however, never merged themselves into one kingdom.

Isa. 28:5, 6 -- "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, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."

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This chapter is a prediction of what was sometime to take place in the house of Ephraim and what was sometime to take place in the house of Judah. History so far does not bear record, however, that this prophecy has yet met its complete fulfillment. Moreover, since this prophecy was made directly for Ephraim and Judah back there, and indirectly for Ephraim and Judah today, therefore, just as the kingdom was divided into two divisions anciently, so also must there be two divisions in modern Israel today. And what happened to the kingdoms of Israel anciently is to be repeated in our day; similarly, what happened to the ancient nations of the world will also happen to their descendants in our day.

According to verses 5 and 6 which we have just read, the Lord must be very close to those for whom He is to be a crown of glory. Let us reread those verses:

Isa. 28:5, 6 -- "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, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."

He is to be all this to "the residue of His people" -- Judah .

We have learned that it is from the Seventh-

day Adventist church that the 144,000 are to come and with them will begin the establishment of the kingdom of Judah, and those of the kingdom of Ephraim are to join the kingdom of Judah and together they will become one nation. If the 144,000 are in the Seventh-day Adventist church, then Ephraim must be found in some other church. The Protestant churches think they can sometime join themselves together into one religious unit, and you know that for some time they have been working toward that goal. We understand the name Ephraim in this prophecy to be speaking chiefly of the Protestant sects, for the Catholic church is a paganized Christian church.

Isa. 28:7 -- "But they 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."

In Isa. 28:1 we are told that Ephraim has been overcome with wine and are therefore drunkards. And Isa. 28:7 tells us that "they" (the "residue" -- Judah) have also erred through wine. In other words, both the Protestant churches and our own Seventh-day Adventist church have become drunk with "wine" -- theories of men.

Isa. 28:8 -- "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean ."

At the time this verse applies the world has no clean place.

Isa. 28:9 -- "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."

When the Lord saw that it was time to teach knowledge and to give understanding of doctrine there was no clean place in the world. Hence the question, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?" The implication which this question carries is that it is almost impossible to teach anyone the pure doctrine, the reason being that at that time all the churches were seen drunk on the contaminated doctrines of men.

But the Truth had to come. And this verse says that it could only be given to those weaned from the milk (those who have long been in the faith and are able to take strong meat). It is for this reason that the Rod message has come only to the Adventist church; the Ephraimites would not understand it. It is only those older in the faith (farther advanced in Truth) that can at first understand. The Adventist doctrines, of course, are the most advanced; therefore, it is to the Adventist church that the Lord

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wants first to teach knowledge and make to understand doctrine.

Isa. 28:10 -- "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."

There are repetitions spoken here. Our message today covers certain subjects from many angles.

Isa. 28:11 -- "For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people."

In its application to the present descendants of Ephraim and Judah who anciently were broken and scattered, we find that the message which is today being brought to Judah comes not in Hebrew, but in the English language.

Isa. 28:12, 13 -- "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. 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."

Those to whom this happens have no excuse.

In His message to Judah, God is to point

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out "the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and...the refreshing." Is not that the very message God has sent us to carry to our Adventist brethren today? But, sadly, they will not hear.

Sister White, in commenting upon these verses has this to say: "...For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. 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. 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.' Why? -- Because they did not heed the word of the Lord that came unto them.

"This means those who have not received instruction, but have cherished their own wisdom, and have chosen to work themselves according to their own ideas. The Lord gives these the test, that they shall either take their position to follow His counsel, or refuse and do according to their own ideas, and then the Lord will leave them to the sure result...." -- Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 418, 419.

Isa. 28:14 -- "Wherefore hear the Word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem."

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This verse calls those who rule this people in Jerusalem (Judah) "scornful men."

Isa. 28:15 -- "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."

They of course will not say this in words, but in their actions they will say this very thing.

Isa. 28:16 -- "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."

When Christ was on earth He had nothing to do with Zion. But in His Kingdom which He is soon to set up He is to be the precious corner stone, the sure foundation, and will sit on the throne of David in Zion. Moreover, it is Christ and His people which will constitute the beginning or foundation of the Kingdom symbolized by the stone of Daniel 2 which is to smite the image on the feet and then grow and become a great mountain.

Those who believe shall not make haste,

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meaning that they will follow, think twice, and not run ahead.

Through our study today it is evident that God's people at this time are going through the very same test that the Jews were put through at Christ's first coming. The test is the same but it is coming in a different way. Christ at that time came in person and they heard Him not. Today He sends His Word and they will not hear It. Do you see that?

Isa. 28:17 -- "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."

A message is brought which is to plumb and straighten judgment and righteousness. It will correct all our ways. The hail in this verse foretells a destruction, and whatever the waters mean, they will overflow their hiding places.



Isa. 28:18 -- "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.'

Those who will not heed *God's Word* must expect these results.

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Isa. 28:19 -- "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."

A great and terrible surprise is to overtake them. And when the judgment of *God* as foretold in Ezekiel 9 commences in the church, it will continue on to the end with any who will be scornful of the Truth.

"And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report." *God* will cause them to understand the report, or understand the doctrine, and it will be a great vexation to them.

Isa. 28:20, 21 -- "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 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."

It was in Perazim that David destroyed the Philistines. And it was in Gibeon that Joshua destroyed the Amorites. Now *God* is to do something "strange," something new, something that has never been done before. It is called His "strange act."

Isa. 28:22 -- "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."

Since it is the Truth that shall make people free, then the bands being made strong would mean that they would turn away from the Truth and never become free. The consumption is determined upon the whole earth to the end of time.

Isa. 28:23-25 -- "Give ye ear, and hear My voice; hearken, and hear My speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? 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?"

The plowman plows his land in preparation for sowing the seed. And the reason he does this is that he expects to receive a harvest.

Isa. 28:26 -- "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him."

Through nature God has instructed the farmer how to prepare his soil and plant his seed.

Isa. 28:27 -- "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."

The Lord also instructs here that not all crops are harvested properly in the same way. One kind requires one method and another requires a different method.

Isa. 28:28 -- "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."

If corn were to be threshed like cummin a farmer would never get through, and he would ruin it.

Isa. 28:29 -- "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

God has told us how to sow, how to harvest, and how to thresh. In the spiritual realm, we as Adventists have learned one thing: that the message is to be carried to the ends of the earth, then probation will close and everything goes down and we go up into Heaven. It is only now that we are beginning to learn how God does His harvesting of the various spiritual crops. He is first to harvest the righteous (the teachable ones) from the Seventh-day

Adventist church (the house of Judah); next, He is to harvest His people from among the Protestants (the house of Israel); and last, He will harvest from the heathen them that will turn and worship Him. Each of these crops He wisely harvests in a different way and in their appointed time of harvest.

In conclusion, let none of us be among those of whom it will be said, "they did not heed the word of the Lord that came unto them" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 419), but let us rather remember that "it is the submissive, teachable spirit that God wants. That which gives to prayer its excellence is the fact that it is breathed from a loving, obedient heart" (*Ibid*).