

The Prophets

Lesson #16

Isaiah 28:1-35:10

Outline

I. **Denunciation (1:1-39:8)**

- A. Woes and blessings (28:1-35:10).
 - 1. Woe on Samaria (28:1-29).
 - 2. Woe on Judah (29:1-31:9).
 - a) For her hypocrisy (29:1-24).
 - b) For her alliance with Egypt (30:1-31:9).
 - 3. The King will reign in righteousness (32:1-20).
 - 4. Assyria and her destruction (33:1-24).
 - 5. The contrasted future of Edom and Israel (34:1-35:10).

Notes

Isaiah 28:1-29

- A woe to the drunkards of Ephraim (28:1-6).
 - The "strong one" would be the Assyrian army, which would be used by God to humble this proud, arrogant and drunken people (cf. 9:11; 10:5-11).
 - The conqueror will regard Samaria as an early ripened fig and hungrily devour it (cf. Nahum 3:12).
 - The remnant will be governed by the Spirit of God, not by the spirit of drunkenness and debauchery; they will be strengthened by His power, not worldly allies.
- A woe to the drunken rulers in Judah (28:7-13).
 - In a drunken stupor, the priest and the prophet err in vision and stumble in judgment.
 - Ahaz's appeal to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria and submission to him (2 Kings 16:7-16) instead of relying on God are now bearing fruits of terror and threats of destruction.
- God's cornerstone in Zion (28:14-22).
 - The scoffing rulers of the city had no fear of death or of destruction from Assyria; their own ingenuity, not trust in God, would save them.
 - The tried and tested stone is a permanent foundation of salvation and safety. This stone stands in contrast to the false foundation on which the rulers of Judah relied.
 - The rulers would find their covenant and agreement of lies too short and too narrow for protection when the overflowing scourge passes through.

- The parable of the plowman (28:23-29).
 - This parable teaches that God's judgments have a purpose; God always acts according to divine wisdom.
 - God is far more than an unlimited power exercising vengeance; He always acts according to His infinite wisdom. In the midst of judgment we should recognize His eternal purpose and then act in faith.

Isaiah 29:1-31:9

- For her hypocrisy (29:1-24).
 - A woe to Ariel (29:1-14).
 - "Ariel" is a symbolic name for Jerusalem or Zion. It was there that the Lord dwelt among His people, the sacrifices were offered and the feasts observed.
 - Through distress Zion will be purged of her moral dross and spiritual filth, becoming to God a true Ariel -- a worthy altar-hearth.
 - This prophecy is not limited to one nation, but includes all the nations that war against Ariel.
 - A woe to those who hide their plans from God (29:15-24).
 - As those who tried to hide their counsel from God had thought to reverse the order of the created and the Creator, so will God actually reverse conditions.
 - Endurance of affliction will be turned into constantly increasing joy in the Lord. Both the meek and the poor will rejoice in their God.
 - Though the physical nation has failed to do so, the remnant will sanctify God's name, which stands for all that He is, and His person -- the Holy One of Jacob.
- For her alliance with Egypt (30:1-31:9).
 - An alliance with Egypt will fail (30:1-17).
 - Instead of finding strength in Pharaoh and Egypt, Judah will find shame, a sense of sin and guilt with the added embarrassment of failure.
 - Like the Sphinx, Egypt looked strong but was helpless to act. She was a nation that could not live up to her past glory and power.
 - Isaiah revealed the true spirit of the people toward the words God uttered through His prophets.
 - Prosperity through God's grace (30:18-26).
 - In this section, God encourage the people with a word of hope and assurance based on His grace and mercy.
 - In carrying out His divine plan, the Lord will not let His people completely perish.
 - With eyes to see and ears to hear, the people will be instructed in the right way; and when it is pointed out to them that they have erred from that way, they will hear and return.

- God's vengeance on Assyria (30:27-33).
 - The "name of the Lord" stands for all that He is -- His being, revelation and action.
 - There is rejoicing not because nations are being destroyed and people are suffering, but because idolatry, wickedness and cruelty are being judged and the righteous delivered (cf. Revelation 19:2).
- God is wise (31:1-3).
 - As His people they should have looked to Him, but instead they would have Him desist from interfering with their plans (30:10-11).
 - In His infinite wisdom as Creator, the Lord neither makes errors in His plans nor in the words revealing them; therefore, He will carry out His purpose as revealed.
- God's providence (31:4-5).
 - God is not fighting for, but against sinful Zion. The shepherds represent the politicians of Judah and the Egyptians.
 - While executing His fierce judgment against the wicked and faithless people of His city, He will protect and care for the remnant through whom He is to achieve His purpose.
- A call to repentance (31:6-7).
 - The Lord never destroys as long as there is a possibility of repentance; but when that is gone, destruction falls.
 - Turning to God would involve the destruction of idols (cf. 30:22). The idols which their hands had made were as impotent to save as were the horses and horsemen of Egypt on whom they depended.
- The destruction of Assyria (31:8-9).
 - Not merely Sennacherib's army that fell before the walls of Jerusalem, but the whole Assyrian power must be destroyed. It must be clearly demonstrated that spirit, not flesh, prevails.
 - As it was God's sword which Babylon wielded against Egypt, so would the instrument of the destruction of Assyria be God's sword in the hand of His servant; therefore, the devouring was of the Lord.

Isaiah 32:1-20

- The new order (32:1-8).
 - Because the king reigns in righteousness, the spiritual blindness and deafness of former times (6:9-10; 29:10-11) will have been taken away. In their stead there will be moral and spiritual alertness (cr. 29:18; 35:5).
- They now understand knowledge; they are enlightened in the ways of the Lord.

- Warning, judgment and blessedness (32:9-20).
 - The prophet charges the women with being at ease and careless, or overconfident and indifferent; they have been lulled into apathy toward the dangers that are at hand.
 - The consequence of the people's sin and indifference will bring about the Assyrian attack. Jerusalem will be desolate.
 - The result of righteousness and justice as they work in the heart will be real peace. Quietness and confidence will ensue forever.

Isaiah 33:1-24

- Woe to the destroyer (33:1-6).
 - The destiny of the Assyrian king and his nation is not in his own hands, but in the hand of God who determines the course of nations (Acts 17:26).
 - The Lord's presence among His people, and their recognition of and abiding in His righteousness and justice, will be their stability or security.
- The broken covenant (33:7-16).
 - The land will reflect the spirit of the people whom the invaders are overrunning and devastating.
 - The time has come for God to declare Himself; He has determined that the time is now ripe for action.
 - Security is found in the stronghold of the Lord and all necessities of life are provided by Him. He is a consuming fire to the enemy.
- The glory of Israel's king (33:17-24).
 - When the eyes of the righteous see the king in His beauty and the land that reaches afar (Zechariah 9:10; Psalm 72:8), the present suffering will be only a memory.
 - Where God is there is safety; He is the ruler and protective power of the city. What God was to the people of Isaiah's day, Christ is to the saints now.

Isaiah 34:1-35:10

- The judgment of the nations (34:1-4).
 - God issues a call to the heathen nations. All on earth are urged to hear and give heed to this universal judgment.
 - Instead of learning of Him through His presence among them, the heathen have tried to destroy Israel and thus rid the world of any knowledge of God.
- The judgment against Edom (34:5-7).
 - Edom is singled out from among the nations. It is probably symbolic of all the heathen peoples, representing all that is profane and unspiritual.

- The whole picture is vivid, terrifying, and unmistakable (Ezekiel 35:6). Blood shed in anger and hatred will return upon the heads of those responsible.
- The total desolation of judgment (34:8-15).
 - In contrast to Zion, Edom is described as a desolate waste. This picture is of complete ruin, waste, and worthlessness.
 - The land of Edom will be an eerie, ghostlike habitation for the wild creatures of the desert.
 - The kingdom having ceased to exist, neither nobles nor princes can respond to a call for help.
- The certainty of the destruction (34:16-17).
 - The "book of the Lord" is doubtless the book Isaiah was writing (cf. 8:6; 30:8), which he claimed from the beginning to be the word of God (cf. 1:10).
 - God Himself has cast the lot determining that this land will belong to the wild animals. He has divided it by His own measuring line.
- The new song (35:1-4).
 - From an unsightly spiritual life there will come beauty of character and sweet incense of the spirit. God will lift Himself and restore the glory of these areas.
 - Weak hands and feeble knees are symbols of unbelief and defeat, but now in God will there be found the strength needed for victory and triumph.
- Cause for the rejoicing (35:5-7).
 - The eyes that have been closed to God's appeal will be opened to see the salvation offered by Him; the ears that have been deaf to His call will be unstopped to hear and heed His word (cf. 6:9-10).
 - There will be a sweeping change in the lives of the people as they are transferred from a desolate wilderness to a luxuriant garden.
- The highway of holiness (35:8-10).
 - The prophet is not saying that the way will be so simple that an inexperienced or unlearned person cannot miss it, but that the man who despises wisdom, being wise in evil instead, will not make the mistake of walking on it.
 - There is a glorious description of those who have passed through the wilderness of affliction and are now experiencing the ecstatic delight and joy of redemption.
 - In the grandeur of this prophecy we have a foreshadowing of the glories that were to come under the Messiah.