

Isaiah 6-39 God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	Ch 6-12 God will rule with goodness and power, replacing human kings	Ch 13-27 God will destroy evil and dismantle this creation	Ch 28-35 God will instantly reverse bad and sad situations to become happy and glad	Ch 36-39 Human kings cannot enable long-term happiness
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Isaiah 28 (NIVUK)

28 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!

² 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.

⁵ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁹ '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?

Sunday 16 November 2025

1a. Ephraim's drunken self-trust...
(28:1)

1b. ...will be judged...
(28:2-4)

1c. ...leading to sober God-trust
(28:5-6)

2a. Ephraim's priests & prophets,
"God's word is nonsense!"
(28:7-10)

Isaiah 28-35 Bad situation ↓ God reverses ↓ Happy outcome	28:1-6 Ephraim's self-trust ↓ Remnant's God-trust	28:7-13 "God's word is nonsense!" ↓ "I'll give you nonsense!"	28:14-29 "We trust in death!" ↓ "No, you will not!"	29:1-8 Jerusalem besieged ↓ Enemies made to disappear	29:9-24 Blind Judah cannot see God ↓ Judah can see God!	30:1-33 Judah's trust in Egypt leads to disaster ↓ God powerfully rescues Judah and blesses them
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¹⁰ For it is:

do this, do that,
a rule for this, a rule for that;^a
a little here, a little there.'

*tsav latsav, tsav latsav,
qav laqav, qav laqav,
ze'eir sham, ze'eir sham*

2b. God, "Fine! I'll give you nonsense!!" (28:11-13)

¹¹ Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues

God will speak to this people,

¹² to whom he said,

'This is the resting-place, let the weary rest';

and, 'This is the place of repose' –

but they would not listen.

¹³ So then, the word of the LORD to them will become:

do this, do that,
a rule for this, a rule for that;
a little here, a little there –

*tsav latsav, tsav latsav,
qav laqav, qav laqav,
ze'eir sham, ze'eir sham*

so that as they go they will fall backwards;

they will be injured and snared and captured.

3a. Judah, "We trust in death!" (28:14-15)

¹⁴ Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers
who rule this people in Jerusalem.

¹⁵ You boast, 'We have entered into a covenant with death,
with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement.

When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by,

it cannot touch us,

for we have made a lie our refuge

and falsehood^b our hiding-place.'

3b. God, "For not trusting in me, I'll judge you..." (28:16-22)

¹⁶ So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone,

a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;

the one who relies on it

will never be stricken with panic.

¹⁷ I will make justice the measuring line

and righteousness the plumb-line;

hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie,

and water will overflow your hiding-place.

^a Hebrew / *sav lasav sav lasav / kav lakav kav lakav* (probably meaningless sounds mimicking the prophet's words); also in verse 13

^b Or *false gods*

<u>31:1-9</u> Judah trust in human Egypt ↓☆☆ God brings divine power to rescue	<u>32:1-8</u> Oppressed by injustice ↓☆☆ Ruled by a righteous King	<u>32:9-20</u> Judah faces judgement for her complacency ↓☆☆ God gifts his Holy Spirit	<u>33:1-24</u> Judah suffers under an unjust destroyer ↓☆☆ God rescues Judah and becomes her forever-King!	<u>34:1-35:10</u> 2nd Exodus God brutally destroys <i>all</i> enemy nations... (34:1-17) ...and leads his people through a <i>verdant</i> wilderness! (35:1-10)
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¹⁸ Your covenant with death will be annulled;
 your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand.

When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
 you will be beaten down by it.

¹⁹ As often as it comes it will carry you away;
 morning after morning, by day and by night,
 it will sweep through.’

The understanding of this message
 will bring sheer terror.

²⁰ The bed is too short to stretch out on,
 the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.

²¹ The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim,
 he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon –
 to do his work, his strange work,
 and perform his task, his alien task.

²² Now stop your mocking,
 or your chains will become heavier;
 the Lord, the LORD Almighty, has told me
 of the destruction decreed against the whole land.

²³ Listen and hear my voice;
 pay attention and hear what I say.

²⁴ When a farmer ploughs for planting,
 does he plough continually?
 Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil?

²⁵ When he has levelled the surface,
 does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin?

Does he not plant wheat in its place,^c
 barley in its plot,^d
 and spelt in its field?

²⁶ His God instructs him
 and teaches him the right way.

3c. “... but it’s temporary and
 has a purpose!” (28:23-29)

^c The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

^d The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Isaiah 1-5 Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	Isaiah 6-39 New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	Isaiah 40-55 New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	Isaiah 56-66 Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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²⁷ Caraway is not threshed with a sledge,
nor is the cartwheel rolled over cummin;
caraway is beaten out with a rod,
and cummin with a stick.

²⁸ Grain must be ground to make bread;
so one does not go on threshing it for ever.
The wheels of a threshing-cart may be rolled over it,
but one does not use horses to grind grain.

²⁹ All this also comes from the LORD Almighty,
whose plan is wonderful,
whose wisdom is magnificent.

For reflection

Diagnostic

1. To what extent do you think about God doing *decisive reversals* on judgement day? Why?

Devotional

2. Are there parts of Isaiah 28 that struck you? Are there parts you need God's help to hear?

3. What parts of life in this cursed creation do you look forward to God *decisively reversing*?