

Allan MacRae, Isaiah 7-12, Lecture 7

This is lecture 7 delivered by Dr. Allan MacRae on Isaiah 7-12:

Now in this course we are studying two passages of Isaiah. Two passages that are parallel. They are each a definite unit. Chapter 7 to 12 is sharply distinguished from what follows and is lightly distinguished but defiantly distinguished from what precedes it. Chapters 28 to 35 are rather sharply different from both what precedes and what follows it. So in each of these cases it is quite clear that we have a definite division. Now in the ancient Hebrew and the ancient Greek they didn't put in these divisions. They didn't have punctuation. They didn't have quotation marks. They didn't have exclamation points. There are many cases where they don't have anything corresponding to a question mark. So there is much more that we have had to decide from context than there is with our modern type of typography. That means that often if we don't have an understanding of a whole passage we are apt to mistranslate or misinterpret a certain part of a passage.

The King James Version is very difficult for most people when you get to difficult passages of the Old Testament. So many words have changed their meaning. So many manners of saying things are different today than they were in those days. But in addition to that while on the whole it was a very excellent translation of the language for 300 years ago, there are many points at which I think their interpretation is better than the interpretation of most of the recent translations. Yet in some rather difficult passages such as chapters 28 and 29 it is quite clear to me that the King James revisers did not study into the passage enough to see what it was really about. Therefore they translated word for word rather than in the light of context. The idea that those words were supposed to present, I believe that you found it much easier to get the sense of chapter 28 if you used a modern version than the King James Version. But there are two or three cases where the King James has unfortunately either mistranslated or has

translated in what I would call a rather sloppy manner, due to their not having studied the passage as a whole.

Now as we have noticed we have the same situation at the beginning of both of these long passages. Both the section chapter 7 to 12 and 28 to 35 start with Ahaz the man who was supposed to be David's successor, head of the people of God, but who was not interested in God's will. A man who was a scorner and a man who was a scoffer. A man who was seeking by his own clever reasoning to figure how he could advance himself and advance his country. And the Lord said if you would trust me, this being my people, you being the descendant of David, the head of my people, if you would trust me I would see you safely through. Now your clever scheme is not going to profit you at all. You will be worse off as a result than you were before. Result of it will be that instead of simply delivering you from Israel and from Syria, the result is going to be to have you land overrun by the Assyrians several times reaching a great climax in the coming of Sennacherib.

But nevertheless you're still my people and Sennacherib and the Assyrians are not going to be able to take Jerusalem, I'm going to protect it. The land will remain independent way into the future. A whole century and more beyond the time of Sennacherib and it will even outlive the Assyrian empire. The conquest would not be by the Assyrians at all but by their successors the Babylonians. As Isaiah gives these messages he occasionally looks way forward beyond them and gets glimpses of God's great plan going far beyond the immediate situation. And of course we are very interested in those glimpses when we get there.

Now let's look at chapter 28. I asked all of you to look particularly at one verse. I asked you what is the subject of the verb for today. The King James for that verse simply says, in verse 7, "but they also have heard." And of course that gives you the idea that the "also" has to do with the "they" and who were the "they." Is he talking about the same people he talked to before or some new people. The New International Version says "and these also stagger from wine"

and in the introduction, "these" suggests that there is a change of subject. Those of you who have already had some Hebrew know that in Hebrew you never see a verb that simply means "go." The verb means "he goes." or "we went" or "he will go" or "they went" or "go you one person" or "go you man" or "go you women." All that is included in the verb. Ordinarily if you say "they stagger" it would just be the verb but in the Hebrew here you learn that also comes at the beginning of the verse. I think that it would be better instead of saying "these also stagger" which sounds like the "also" goes with the "stagger," it should be "also these stagger," or "these too stagger." I think if we say "too" it puts it with the word before rather than the word after. I think the best thing would be to add "too." "Also these too," "gam eileh bayayin." The subject is expressed here in the Hebrew. There is a definite change. It is not simply "they" it is "these" and I believe most of your modern translations probably all of them would bring that out. It is "these," and there is a contrast with what precedes. He's turning to a new audience.

Now in the study of the chapter one finds out the situation. In chapter 7 you are told the situation. You are given the background. Here you have to go through the chapter and find various indications that tell you the background. Of course you have the material in Kings and you have the material at the beginning of Isaiah 7 showing you some detail about the background. So after we do that we are justified in saying this is the same situation in general but slightly different. In chapter 7 Isaiah in order to get Ahaz' attention had to go out to the place where Ahaz was directing the preparation of the protective armor to protect them from the expected invasion from the Syrians and the Ephraimites. He had to go out there to get him to listen. Now in this case in chapter 28 he is not talking to Ahaz. Ahaz is probably not present. But this is undoubtedly a banquet. A banquet put on by the nobles. It is put on by Ahaz' leading men. These nobles of Judah are having this banquet in order to celebrate the fact that the arrangement with Assyria has been made. Assyria is going to protect them they will not have to fear being

conquered by Israel and by Syria.

So in that situation, where they're having this great banquet of celebration. How many people there knew what the banquet was about we don't know. But at least the leaders in the banquet knew. Here they are having this big banquet and Isaiah comes in and you might say where's your ticket, what right do you have to come in? It might well be, it was more or less open. There had been a fairly general invitation given. A good many people were in there. Some of them were people who may have thought highly of Isaiah. They couldn't just say look here you're not invited, you don't belong here. Anyway a prophet in those days had certain privileges. He could speak out on various occasions and people were expected to listen. So Isaiah steps into the banquet and says something that pleases them greatly. They are going to be delivered from Ephraim's attack because the Assyrians are coming. If only they can hold off Ephraim long enough to not be overrun by them before the Assyrians get there.

So here he says in Isaiah 28:1: "Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards" while these fellows are sitting at their table enjoying their sumptuous meal. They are happy to be reminded that they don't need to worry about Ephraim. Ephraim is coming, they are going to try to protect themselves from Ephraim. Isaiah said "woe to Ephraim." Well that's great that makes everyone feel happy. So no one feels like throwing Isaiah out. They are interested to listen. "Woe to the wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards." Oh yeah those awful drunkards up north in Ephraim, that's not the same as what we are. They are awful drunkards up there. Were glad to hear them rebuked. "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." Some of these fellows are barely able to stand up. But still they can look down on those drunkards up there laid down by wine.

In Isaiah 28:2: "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." What is this like a hailstorm and a destructive rain, like a driving rain and a

flooding downpour? Is this describing the coming of the Assyrian army that's going to sweep over Ephraim and destroy it? That's grand to know that that's going to happen. He will throw it forcefully to the ground that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards. He repeatedly talks about these drunkards of Ephraim, and they all say, "O, yes, these awful drunkards of Ephraim.

"That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like a fig right before harvest--as soon as someone takes in his hand, he swallows it" (Isa. 28:3-4). A figurative expression, someone going into a vineyard and seeing just one fig that is really ripe and he hasn't had any figs since the last year's season and he grabs it off the tree and swallows it, just like how Ephraim is going to be overcome, my that's wonderful isn't it?, the Judean partiers would think.

Then we have a break. They have been very happy to hear Isaiah so far, giving his denunciation of Ephraim that they were so afraid will conquer them before the Assyrians could get there. But here he turns his attention and says, "in that day," I think in present idiom they would better say "there will be a day." There will be a day when "the Lord almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people" (Isa. 28:5). So here was this beautiful wreath. Samaria was a city at that time many times as big as Jerusalem. It was up on a much higher hill than Jerusalem, had a much greater outlook. It seemed to be far ahead of Jerusalem. Actually it was the capital of a country twice as large as that over which Jerusalem was capital of at that time.

He says, here is this wreath that is going to be wiped out. It's not going to completely disappear, but the day is coming when "the Lord almighty will be a glorious crown a beautiful wreath, for the remnant of his people" (Isa. 28:5). There are going to be some left, there are going to be people left from the Northern Kingdom. People might have to go through captivity and through misery but God is going to lead and bring them out safely. "For the remnant of his people, he will be a beautiful wreath, he will be a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, a

source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate" (Isa. 28:5-6). So in these two verses these banqueters have sort of put up with it, they said well that was great he encouraged the people who fight against Ephraim because they believe God's going to protect us and we are going to win out and we won't be overcome by them and that's helpful. Fine. But of course you know that he has some pious expressions we don't, you can expect that from a prophet. So we won't worry too much about it.

But then in chapter 28 verse 7 he says and "these also stagger from wine and reel from strong drink." You've been talking about the drunkards of Ephraim, look how awful they are. And look at these folks, he says, they're just as bad. Well they don't like that particularly. But he's already gotten their attention, he's gotten their interest. There are many lessons in tact in the Scripture. There are times when somebody goes up to a man and shakes his fist in his face and says you old sinner it's time you turn to the Lord and repent. And the Lord uses them to bring him to himself. But in most cases the Lord uses more tactful methods. In most cases he wants us to get attention, get interest, and then we're in position to give the message.

"These also," I think he pointed, "these also." You see that Hebrew word "these" is put in there when ordinarily you wouldn't even have a subject. In the King James it says "they all saw it" doesn't get the thought across. I think verses 5 and 6 are a general expression of God's mercy with perhaps thinking to quite an extent of the remnant of the Northern Kingdom. But some of the people here might think that Israel is gone, we are the remnant. Some of them might think that they are the remnant, that's great. Look at the position we're in, we are the remnant God is going to bless. But I think both ideas were in it, people could take it either way they wanted.

But now when he says "these," he turns his direction right to the people in front of him in the banquet. And he says "these also were staggering, priests and prophets stagger from strong drink and are befuddled with wine. They reel from

strong drink they stagger from seeing visions. They stumble when rendering decisions" (Isa. 28:7). And of course the leaders now think that he's wrong he says we stumble when we make decision. We made a mighty good decision making this agreement with Assyria. They're going to destroy Ephraim and Aram and make us safe. We made a good decision. Yet Isaiah says they stumble when rendering decisions. He says "all the tables are covered with vomit and there's not a spot without filth." Now that's a pretty strong statement, and they don't like that. And the next verse, chapter 28 verse 9 in the NIV has a quotation mark at the beginning. There are of course no quotation marks in the King James version and there are no quotation marks in the Hebrew. But from the sense of the passage it is very clear that what follows they are trying to teach that somebody else is talking about Isaiah. "Who does Isaiah think he's trying to teach talking to us this way? Who is he talking to? To whom is he explaining the message? Does he think we are children weaned from their mother's milk. Those just taken from the breast."

The next words are hard to translate into English precisely, though the general thought of them is very clear. The King James translates them in verse 10 "for precept *must be* on precept." The "must be" is in italics and should not be there. "For precept is on precept, precept on precept. Line on line on line. Here a little there a little." The NIV has it a little differently. The same idea they say for it is "do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there." Isaiah is talking to us like little children, repeating the same thing over and over. You get it now, this and this and this. Isaiah is always coming with all these talks. You trust in God you follow him. You remember the old days the way God did it in the past. That's just baby talk. We don't want that kind of stuff. What's he trying to do? Well they are mumbling to each other now. And this is what they are saying.

Isaiah answers them in verse 11. That is not made clear in the King James, it says, "for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." That ties it to what precedes to where it doesn't belong. It starts with "for." When

the preposition "ki" could just as well be translated "but." The NIV is a little free here but I think it expresses the idea pretty well. Very well then, "with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak with this people." What does that mean? You don't want to take God's "do this this and this, and believe this. His simple teaching of the Bible. You think its treating you like children to treat you that way. Well Isaiah says God will speak to you with foreign lips and strange tongues, this people 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. So then the word of the Lord to them will become and he repeats their words, "Don't do and do, rule on rule, a little here a little there so that they will go and fall backward. Be injured and snared and captured." You say we're trying to give you baby talk, we're trying to give you these little simple pious things that you think are a lot of nonsense. You won't listen – you won't think while God will speak to you with foreign lips and strange tongue. It will sound kind of like baby talk when you hear these Assyrian soldiers calling to one another for what they're to do, rushing through your houses and grabbing your property and taking your children away captive. He says, the word of the Lord, if you won't listen to what you say is the baby talk of the pious presentation of God's will, God will speak to you in a way that will seem to you like baby talk. He will speak to you like another tongue with other lips that will sound to you like gibberish. But God will speak to you in that way. Now of course that meant the Assyrian army, the Assyrian soldiers they may not be able to grasp that as yet but that is certainly in the light of context of what it is. If you go on further in the chapter it becomes quite clear.

So then he says "this will happen so they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured" (Isa. 28:13). Therefore, now he speaks quite directly to them. "Therefore hear the word of the Lord you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, 'We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made in agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by it cannot touch us'" (Isa. 28:14-15). What do they mean by that? "We've entered

into a covenant with death, with hell we have made an agreement. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by it won't touch us." In other words, you have your clever idea that here as this aggressive Assyrian force threatening to overrun everything, we're getting on their side. We're getting the Assyrians to help us. And when the Assyrians overrun Aram and Israel it won't hurt us. They go on to attack some on the other side of us, but they won't bother with us, we're their allies. We'll be perfectly safe. We've made a covenant with death, we've made an agreement with hell. And that way we are going to fight fire with fire. We will work our clever scheme, our plan that's going to put us on the side of the terrible aggressors and bring us safely through it. We've made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.

But he says, "So this is what the sovereign Lord says." What does God say in answer to that? What did God say to Ahaz in the first place when Isaiah went out. He said, trust in the Lord. The Lord can deliver you. Here's what the sovereign lord says, "See I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious corner stone for a sure foundation. The one who trusts will never be dismayed." Now that word "dismayed" could also be translated, "shall not make haste." And both meanings are involved in the situation and which interpretation of the word is correct we can't tell. It's like many words in English that have two possibilities because two different words have fallen together in them. It is like if I hold up a little pocket testament and I say this book is "light" and it has a black cover. You would say that's not "light" that's "dark" color. Then if I hold up a great big wedding Bible and it has a white cover and I say this book is "light," you would say its not "light" its "heavy." Well two old English words that were completely different have fallen together into our one word, "light." Usually we can tell from the context what the meaning is but there are cases when we can't. In this case we can't tell whether it should be "dismayed" or it "will never make haste." But both are true. The one who trusts in the Lord need never be "dismayed" as all things are in accordance with God's will. If he is truly following the Lord, God works all

things for his good. He need not be "dismayed" and he "need not make haste." There's a difference between doing things rapidly and making haste. When you "make haste" you get all bothered, fuss and get things mixed up, and probably will do them wrong. You never need to get into that situation if you are truly trusting in the Lord.

Now in this verse then, Isaiah is looking at the immediate situation. But he is giving a general principal, and he gives the general principal in words that can very specifically look forward to what God is going to do when he is going to provide a precious corner stone for a sure foundation, a stone in Zion. So there is definitely a looking forward to the coming of Christ. But that is not the immediate significance. It is a general principal which finds its full application in the coming of Christ.

There's a problem in using a New Testament quotation to decide on the precise reading of an Old Testament passage. There's always this problem, that New Testament usually quotes from the common Greek translation and consequently but if the point that the New Testament is trying to bring out is not brought out in the common Greek translation it will give you a direct translation from the Hebrew to bring out that point. So if the New Testament quotation is dealing with the precise point under consideration then you can say definitely that's the way the Old Testament should be translated, that's the correct and reasonable text, like "virgin shall bring forth." But if the point that is being brought out is clearly brought out and there is a word that isn't closely related to that that is a little different from the way we translate the Old Testament passage then it may be simply quoting from the common Greek Septuagint translation. You and I would do the same thing. We quote a verse to bring out a point and there may be some part of the verse that isn't quite as precise a translation as we might wish but we don't spend time discussing that part of the verse. So I would say you have to see how vital it is to the immediate significance and of course both are true. He will not be "dismayed," and he will "not make haste." They are two

different ideas. Now "disappointed" is more like "dismayed." That fits more in that category. But I don't have the precise Greek word in mind.

So we have here a time when he looks way ahead. But he's looking way ahead in relation to the present situation. He says you must trust in God and in the stone that God will set in place. The cornerstone of God's work. You must trust in him, he says and you will never be dismayed or you never need make haste. "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" (Isa. 28:17). You think you're safe because of this alliance with Assyria. You think Assyria is going to deliver you from Aram and from Israel and you don't need to worry about it because you're on Assyria's side. Well you'll find out that doesn't do you any good. The Assyrians will take everything in their way and they will overrun the whole land and eventually they will be ready to take Jerusalem itself and I'm going to protect you from that the Lord says. I'm going to give you a great protection but it won't be any of your doing. It will be by God's miraculous way that he will keep the Assyrian from destroying Jerusalem.

It makes it very clear as it goes on. He says, "hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place" (Isa. 28:17). Your covenant with death will be annulled. That is their covenant with the Assyrians, who will bring death to so many countries, that you think by betting on their side you will be safe. It's not going to work that way at all.

I remember Dr. Chism who was a very fine missionary in Korea before the beginning of the World War II. In Korea there, the Japanese were making people go to the shrine and worship the Japanese ancestors and many of the missionaries said well it's just a form, we go and we bow to the Japanese shrine. But it's just a form. It's a patriotic thing, that Japanese are insisting that we do here and if we submit to it we can carry on our missionary work unhindered. It's worth it just making this compromise. Dr. Chism was one of those who said "No." He said "this is idolatry." He said we cannot present to these Koreans the necessity in

believing in God and trusting Christ and trusting him alone and then go on worshiping at a Japanese shrine. And so he refused to do it. And there were a number of missionaries like that who did and missionaries were hampered and some of them were put in prison. They had quite a bit of persecution from the Japanese occupying authorities there. But then the time came when the war between the United States and Japan was imminent and the missionaries all had to leave and come home or those who didn't were interred for the whole course of the war. And Dr. Chism got on the boat and there was another missionary on the boat. One who had compromised with the Japanese authorities. One who had gone to the shrine, given all these excuses that he could be free to preach and present the word without interference even if he went through this form of bowing at the heathen shrine. And Dr. Chism said the boat went from Korea to Japan and stopped there and was thoroughly examined by the Japanese and then allowed to proceed. He said the Japanese authority came on and he said William Chism and Mr. Chism came forward and he said where is your baggage and he glanced at it and marked it and let him go. Then he said this other missionary was called forward who felt that he, having gone to the shrines compromised in so many ways, these Japanese would realize he was their friend. Make him no trouble whatever. They gave Dr. Chism a little trouble there which was a bit embarrassing but this other man they went through everything he had. They took every bit of material he had. They spread it out on the decks and examined it very thoroughly. The man was so embarrassed and so humiliated. He said the Japanese could understand a man standing for what he believed even at the cost of losing something by it. But when the man who compromised they were willing to take advantage of his compromise but when it came to his leaving they didn't trust him. And they were going to go through everything that he had before they were sure it was safe to let him go on.

And as he says here, "water will overflow your hiding place; your covenant with death will be annulled" and in the end that kind of compromise, that does not

help one to advance the Lord's work. How much more does it fail to help one to advance such objectives as these people had. "Your agreement with hell will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by you will be beaten down by it. 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" (Isa. 28:18-19). So he points forward to the series of Assyrian incursions to their land that they were to suffer as a result of Ahaz' schemes, instead of trusting God.

It means that they will not profit by their underhanded scheme, that everything will be brought out in the light of God's justice. And they will suffer from it much worse than they would if they hadn't made this deal with Assyria. I would say that there is an area in which it's not always easy to draw absolutely sharp lines. But it is an area in which this definitely does apply. I would say that it is better to draw too sharp a line than to make a compromising line. But that there is a right point to find in relation to it. The one who thinks that he can work with and deal with those who are destroying the work of God and thereby get a chance to advance the Gospel is usually going to find it doesn't work out. It does not receive God's favor.

Yes, I believe that there is a great deal in this chapter that has much application to what's in our lives and our Christian work. So he says when the overwhelming scourge comes through, he says "you will be beaten down by it." What would verse 20 mean if you don't have the context and the situation in mind? "The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you." What he means is that the scheme of yours that you think is going to protect you isn't sufficient. It's not satisfactory. The bed's too short to stretch out on. The blanket's too narrow to wrap yourself in. It's a figurative expression of course. But in the context the meaning is absolutely clear. Your human schemes disregard God's will. They disregarded the clear teaching of his word, they will not work in the end. They will not give you a bed that's long enough to stretch on,

a blanket that's wide enough to wrap yourself in. "The Lord will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as at the Valley of Gibeon" (Isa. 28:21). This is referring to a case where God used Joshua's army in order to completely defeat the Canaanites, where the Lord miraculously interfered in order for them to accomplish far more than what would have been expected. He says the Lord is going to use the Assyrian for his purposes. You are going to find that while you think they are going to stop at your border they won't stop there as it says in chapter 7. It will sweep on through into Judah.

"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" (Isa. 28:22). Now these 22 verses give us the situation rather precisely. We see him in the banquet hall speaking to the people. Now whether they let him get this far or whether they rose up and drove him out and he can finish the talk to those who were rather impressed and followed him I would think it likely that he was able to get this far there. But he goes on talking about the general situation clear on to the end of chapter 35. I would guess that most of that is given to a group of men who were interested in hearing the word of the Lord as Isaiah gave it. We have this direct annunciation here we have some more direct annunciation as we go on through. Now to the group to which he spoke, whether it was the whole banquet hall or whether it was a group that came out or whether it was a group he continued talking to the next day, there were those who were representative of the people as a whole, those who represented the scoffers and the leaders and weren't interested in what he had to say, but there were also the true followers of God.

I would say that most particularly you get it from verses 7 and 8. For Isaiah turns and says after criticizing the drunkards of Ephraim he turns his attention to these people right here and says that these people also are staggering from wine and strong drink. "Every table is full of vomit." Why mention table unless he's in a place where there are actually tables? In those days when people had much better memories than they have today. Although even today there are people who have

memorized the whole New Testament. There are many who have memorized the whole Koran. My memory was far better 50 years ago than it is now. I remember once when I was in college when I was talking with a fellow and he happened to refer to something six months before and I remembered everything he said and everything I said. I couldn't do that now I don't believe. But memories vary. It is all together possible that Isaiah wrote it down. It's also possible that he had a friend there who wrote it down as he gave it. We just don't know. But I would say that almost certainly it was written down soon afterward.

So this next part of the chapter I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on. If you'd read it without the early part in mind you sort of wonder, what on earth is he talking about. But with the early part in mind you can see a figurative presentation of a number of great spiritual truths. He is saying God works in logical reasonable ways. "Listen and hear my voice, pay attention to what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he keep on plowing all the time? Does he keep on all the time breaking up and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way" (Isa. 28:23-26). He is saying God has his purpose in relation to different situations. We find this brought out very clearly in the fact that Isaiah predicted God would protect Jerusalem, Jeremiah would predict that God would destroy Jerusalem. They had a different situation but all part of God's great plan and God's plan is orderly. God's plan is systematic, you might say that life is like a rug. Say an oriental rug in which you look at the bottom part and see threads here and there and you don't see any pattern. There's no clear picture. You see the front of it and there is a beautiful picture but you look at the back and you see the wrong side and you don't see the picture. We look at it that way. But some day we will see the whole picture and we will see that God has worked in our lives in logical and a reasonable fashion. God has a purpose in it all.

And so in verse 27, "Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a

cartwheel rolled over cummin; caraway is beaten out with a rod and cummin with a stick." God deals with you in proportion with your situation and with your need, and to your character. You can trust in him.

"Grain must be ground to make bread; so one doesn't go on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheel of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it" (Isa. 28:28). The farmer uses different methods. He uses the method that pertains to the result that he wants to bring and we don't know each of us exactly the full result that God wants to bring in our lives. But we do know that God knows what is suited to bring the qualities into us that he wants us to have to bring the situations into our lives that he wants us to have and God works in mysterious ways in the lives of all of us but they are ways that are logical.

I detest the phrase "unconditional election." I certainly believe God has chosen those who are to be saved. But when you say "unconditional" it sounds as if he just reaches his hand and picks out a few names. And that is certainly not true. That of course is not what the term is supposed to mean. The term was selected in order to make it acrostic and it was a poor selection. Because God has purposes in all that he does. There are conditions involved in it. He uses that which will accomplish the results that he desires. He will do whatever he needs to even if it is a hard beating then that's what he'll use. That which will be broken by it instead of being built up by it he uses more gentle methods. So this passage here about the farmer is a passage that applied to the people in Israel, God's treatment of the wicked and God's treatment of the true believers. God's treatment of them in different situations and which applies to each of our lives too. So a passage which they say, it means nothing I think when you first read it. But reading it carefully in the light of what it means its all figurative, but they are very important figures that can apply to the way that God deals with each one of us.

At the beginning of chapter 29 I'm not sure there should be a big break there. There is a little break there. He says "Woe to you Ariel. The city where David settled" (Isa. 29:1). Now where did David settle? David was born in

Bethlehem. But David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. And so Ariel here means Jerusalem. He's speaking here about Jerusalem. And the word "Ariel" could be interpreted in one of two ways. The word "Ariel" could be "a lion" or it could be "a hearth or furnace." It could be "the lion of God" or "the hearth of God." I don't know if it is called this anywhere else. It is perfectly obvious from the figure that he is here speaking about Jerusalem and as to between these two possibilities I believe we have a pretty definite answer in chapter 31 that we looked at the other day. Where we ended, "declares the Lord whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem" this is the hearth of God. It is the furnace of fire where God is going to work out some of his great mysterious purposes.

So for next time I would like you too look over chapter 29 I don't think you need to take as much time as you did on 28. I think it's one of the most interesting chapters in this whole section, when you get the key to its interpretation, a substantial part of the key is first gotten by having looked at chapter 28 already.

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