

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10, Isaiah 28-30

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10, Isaiah 28-30, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

The provided text is a lecture by Robert Vannoy on Isaiah 28-30, focusing on judgment, security, and God's plans. Vannoy explores Isaiah's address to the leaders of Jerusalem, who are allied with Assyria, and contrasts their false sense of security with God's foundation stone, a veiled reference to the Messiah. The lecture interprets Isaiah's prophecies through the lens of both immediate historical context and long-term theological implications, considering covenant, judgment, and the inclusion of Gentiles. Vannoy also analyzes figurative language, particularly the transformation of Lebanon into a fertile field, and debates interpretations with J. Barton Payne, highlighting the difficulty of deciphering symbolic meanings. Ultimately, the text offers a detailed exploration of Isaiah's message concerning Israel's disobedience, God's judgment, and the future restoration and expansion of God's people.

**2. 26 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Major Prophets.**



**Vannoy_MP_Session
n10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10, Isaiah 28-30

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's lecture on Isaiah 28-30:

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy on Isaiah 28-30

Overall Theme: Vannoy focuses on Isaiah's prophecies concerning judgment on both the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim/Samaria) and Judah (specifically Jerusalem's leaders), their misplaced trust in alliances (particularly with Assyria), and God's ultimate plan of redemption, which includes a veiled Messianic reference and the inclusion of Gentiles. He emphasizes the difficulty of interpreting figurative language in Isaiah.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- Isaiah 28:1-13: Judgment on Ephraim and Mocking Leaders in Jerusalem:** Isaiah initially prophesies against the Northern Kingdom, using figurative language about "the crown of pride, of the drunkards of Ephraim," referring to Samaria and its impending destruction by Assyria (referred to as a "hailstorm" and "flood of mighty waters"). However, the focus shifts in verse 7 to the leaders in Jerusalem, who are also "out of the way" due to "wine and strong drink" and "stumble in judgment." These leaders mock Isaiah's message as simplistic ("precept upon precept, line upon line; here a little, there a little"), comparing it to baby talk. Isaiah responds that if they won't listen to clear teaching, they will hear the "strange lips and another tongue" of the Assyrian invaders.
- Quote: *"Whom shall he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand? For those who are weaned from milk and drawn to breast? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little."*
- Isaiah 28:14-22: Alliance with Assyria ("Covenant with Death") and God's Foundation Stone:** Isaiah directly addresses the "scornful men that rule this people who are in Jerusalem." These leaders believe they are safe due to their alliance with Assyria, which Isaiah characterizes as a "covenant with death" and an agreement with Sheol, a refuge in lies and falsehood. God, however, declares that the only true protection is in the "foundation stone" that He has laid in Zion, which Vannoy interprets as faith in God's provision and ultimately a veiled Messianic reference to Christ (Immanuel). Those who trust in this foundation will

"not make haste" (NIV: "will never be dismayed"), which is related to the Septuagint's "shall not be ashamed" and Romans 9:33's quotation.

- Quote: *"Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death and with Sheol are we in agreement. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge; under falsehood have we hid ourselves.'"*
- Quote: *"Therefore, thus saith the LORD: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."*
- **Isaiah 28:23-29: God's Plans Like a Farmer's:** This section uses the analogy of a farmer's careful and diverse methods to illustrate God's plans. God is not haphazard, but works according to a carefully laid plan. Vannoy suggests that God will not judge forever but will move to the next stage, just as a farmer doesn't plow forever. He deals differently with those inside and outside the covenant, chastising his people but not finally destroying them. Different products require different threshing techniques.
- Quote: *"When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he break – keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin? [...] All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel, magnificent in wisdom."*
- **Isaiah 29:1-8: Ariel/Jerusalem Besieged and Delivered:** Ariel is identified as a name for Zion/Jerusalem, potentially meaning "lion of God" or "hearth/fireplace of God." While the city will be besieged and brought low, God will intervene to protect it. The enemies will be like a dream to a hungry or thirsty man, ultimately unfulfilled. This is seen as fulfilled in Isaiah 37 when Sennacherib is forced to withdraw from Jerusalem.
- Quote: *"Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled. Add year to year; let your cycle of festivals go on. Yet I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth."*
- **Isaiah 29:9-12: Spiritual Blindness:** This passage denounces the leaders who, like those in chapter 28, are spiritually drunk ("Be drunk, but not from wine"). They have access to God's Word (the "scroll") but refuse to read or understand it, offering excuses.

- Quote: *"Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from beer. The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers)."*
- **Isaiah 29:13-24: Reversal of Fortunes and Inclusion of Gentiles:** Vannoy interprets this passage as a "bird's eye view" of God's long-term plan, beyond the immediate Assyrian crisis. The key is verse 17: "In a very short time will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest?" Vannoy suggests that Israel, the "fertile field" (God's cultivated vineyard) will be treated as outside the covenant, while the Gentiles ("forests of Lebanon") will be brought into the fold. This is further supported by verse 18: "In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see." He compares this to Romans 11's olive tree analogy. The unfaithful leaders will be replaced by those they consider outside of God's people. Verse 22-23 speaks to Jacob/Israel rejoicing when seeing their children, the work of God's hands, which he sees as the true Israel being increased with those not of Jacob's physical seed. Verse 24 suggest even the "wayward in spirit" will eventually come to understanding.
- Quote: *"The LORD says: These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."*
- Quote: *"In a very short time will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest? In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see."*
- **Alternative Interpretation (J. Barton Payne):** Vannoy also presents J. Barton Payne's alternative interpretation, which sees the "Lebanon as fruitful field" imagery as a symbol of Assyria's reduction to weakness, while Israel becomes more powerful ("fruitful field as forest"). Payne connects this to the immediate aftermath of God's deliverance from the Assyrians and its effect on the people.

Key Interpretive Challenges:

- **Figurative Language:** Vannoy highlights the difficulty of interpreting the figurative language, particularly in Isaiah 29:17 ("Lebanon turned into a fertile field"). He stresses that the interpretation of this verse significantly impacts the understanding of the entire passage.
- **Symbolism of "Fruitful Field":** Whether the "fruitful field" represents weakness (as Payne suggests) or God's cultivated people (as Vannoy believes) is a central point of contention.
- **Scope of Prophecy:** Is the prophecy referring to the immediate future (the Assyrian crisis) or a more distant future (the inclusion of Gentiles)?

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10, Isaiah 28-30

Isaiah 28-30 Study Guide

I. Study Guide

Isaiah 28: Address to Leaders and Judgment

- **Context:** Isaiah addresses the leaders (nobles) of Jerusalem, similar to his earlier interactions with King Ahaz.
- **Ephraim's Judgment:** The chapter begins with a prophecy of judgment against the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim/Samaria) due to their pride and drunkenness, symbolized by a devastating "hailstorm" (Assyria).
- **Mockery of Isaiah:** The Jerusalem leaders mock Isaiah's teaching, dismissing it as simplistic "baby talk."
- **Assyrian Alliance:** The leaders have sought security through an alliance with Assyria, which Isaiah describes as a "covenant with death" and a reliance on "lies." They believe this alliance will protect them from the coming Assyrian scourge.
- **God's Foundation Stone:** God counters their false security with the promise of a true foundation stone laid in Zion, interpreted as faith in God's provision, ultimately fulfilled in the Messiah (a "veiled Messianic reference"). Believing in this foundation will prevent "haste" or "being ashamed."
- **Overwhelming Judgment:** The Assyrian invasion is depicted as an overflowing river that will sweep away their refuge of lies and their "covenant with death." This judgment is inevitable because of their refusal to trust in God.
- **God's Strange Work:** God's judgment on Judah is described as a "strange work," as it is directed at His own people rather than their enemies.
- **Farmer Analogy:** The chapter concludes with an analogy of a farmer, illustrating that God's actions are purposeful and suited to the situation. God will not only plow in judgment, but in time, will plant and harvest. He will deal with those in covenant differently than those outside the covenant.

Isaiah 29: Woe to Ariel and Future Restoration

- **Ariel (Jerusalem):** The chapter begins with a "woe" to Ariel, a term likely referring to Jerusalem. The meaning of Ariel could be "lion of God" or "hearth/fireplace of God," with the latter fitting the context of judgment and siege.
- **Siege and Reversal:** Jerusalem will be besieged and brought low, but this situation will be reversed. God will intervene and protect Judah.
- **Blindness and Deafness:** The leaders are denounced for their spiritual blindness and deafness. They have access to God's Word, but they refuse to understand or obey it, making excuses.
- **Future Restoration and Reversal:** A long-term view of God's program is presented. Those currently outside the covenant (Gentiles) will be brought in, while those who have the covenant (Israel) will be temporarily treated as outsiders, as if Lebanon will become the fertile field and the fertile field will seem like a forest. Those who were deaf will hear and the blind will see.
- **Abraham's Redemption:** God, who redeemed Abraham, will redeem the house of Jacob, adding to the numbers of true Israel those not of the seed of Jacob in the flesh, who have been redeemed.
- **Weakening of Evil:** As the gospel spreads there will be a weakening of the influence of evil.

II. Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the primary sin of the leaders in Jerusalem that Isaiah addresses in Isaiah 28?
2. What does Isaiah mean when he says that the leaders have made a "covenant with death"?
3. What is God's alternative to the leaders' alliance, and how is it described in Isaiah 28?
4. Explain the significance of Isaiah's comparison of God's actions to those of a farmer in Isaiah 28.
5. What is "Ariel" in Isaiah 29, and what are some possible interpretations of the term?
6. How does Isaiah depict the spiritual condition of the leaders in Isaiah 29:9-12?

7. Explain the figurative language of Lebanon being turned into a fertile field and vice-versa in Isaiah 29:17.
8. According to Isaiah 29:18, who will receive understanding and insight in the future?
9. Who does the speaker think Jacob will see among his children (29:22-23)?
10. What weakening influence will occur as the gospel spreads?

III. Answer Key

1. The primary sin of the leaders in Jerusalem is their lack of trust in God and their reliance on their own wisdom and political alliances, specifically their alliance with Assyria. They reject God's provision for security.
2. A "covenant with death" refers to the leaders' alliance with Assyria, an ungodly nation. They believe this alliance will protect them, but Isaiah declares it will ultimately fail and bring destruction.
3. God offers a true foundation stone laid in Zion, which represents faith in God's provision and, ultimately, the Messiah. Trusting in this foundation provides true and lasting security, unlike the false security offered by their alliance.
4. The farmer analogy illustrates that God's actions are purposeful and timed appropriately. God doesn't plow forever, but will follow judgment with planting and harvesting.
5. "Ariel" likely refers to Jerusalem. The term may mean "lion of God" or "hearth/fireplace of God," the latter fitting the context of judgment and refining fire.
6. The leaders are spiritually blind and deaf, choosing to ignore God's Word. They are drunk, but not from wine, indicating that their spiritual stupor is caused by their rejection of God.
7. The transformation symbolizes a reversal of fortunes: those once outside God's covenant (Gentiles) will be brought in, while Israel will be treated as though they were outside God's covenant for a time. This symbolizes the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan of salvation.
8. Those who were once deaf will hear and the blind will see, indicating those who had been outside of God's covenant will be given understanding and insight. This

refers to Gentiles who will embrace God's Word and enter into a relationship with Him.

9. The speaker indicates that Jacob will see among his children, those not of the seed of Jacob in the flesh, but the addition of those who have been redeemed.
10. As the gospel spreads there will be a weakening of the influence of evil.

IV. Essay Questions

Instructions: Choose one or two of the following questions and develop a well-supported essay response.

1. Discuss the parallels between Isaiah's interactions with King Ahaz in chapters 7-12 and his address to the leaders of Jerusalem in chapters 28-30. What are the key similarities and differences in their responses to Isaiah's message?
2. Analyze the various metaphors and figurative language used in Isaiah 28-30 to describe the coming judgment. What is the significance of these images, and what do they reveal about the nature of God's judgment?
3. Explore the Messianic undertones in Isaiah 28:16, focusing on the "foundation stone" laid in Zion. How does this verse connect to New Testament interpretations of Jesus as the cornerstone?
4. Compare and contrast the two interpretations of Isaiah 29:17, focusing on the image of Lebanon turning into a fertile field and vice versa. Which interpretation do you find more compelling, and why?
5. Discuss the theme of spiritual blindness and deafness in Isaiah 29, and its connection to the rejection of God's Word by the leaders of Jerusalem. How does this theme relate to the broader message of the book of Isaiah?

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ephraim:** Refers to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Samaria:** Capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Assyria:** A powerful empire that threatened both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.
- **Covenant with Death:** An alliance with Assyria, viewed by Isaiah as a false source of security.
- **Sheol:** The Hebrew term for the afterlife, often translated as "hell" or "the grave."
- **Zion:** A term used to refer to Jerusalem.
- **Ariel:** A name for Jerusalem, potentially meaning "lion of God" or "hearth/fireplace of God."
- **Messianic Reference:** A reference that alludes to the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ).
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
- **Immanuel:** "God with us," a name/title applied to the promised Messiah.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 10, Isaiah 28-30, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text from Robert Vannoy's lecture on Isaiah 28-30:

FAQ on Isaiah 28-30

- **What is the immediate context of Isaiah 28, and who is Isaiah addressing?**
- Isaiah 28 opens with a prophecy of judgment against Ephraim, the Northern Kingdom, and its capital, Samaria, for their pride and drunkenness. However, the focus quickly shifts to the leaders and nobles of Jerusalem in Judah. Isaiah is directly addressing these "scornful men" who rule the people of Jerusalem, criticizing their behavior and choices.
- **What "covenant with death" have the nobles in Jerusalem made, and why does Isaiah condemn it?**
- The "covenant with death" is interpreted as an alliance with Assyria. The nobles believe this alliance will protect them from impending disaster ("the overflowing scourge"). Isaiah condemns this alliance because it represents a misplaced trust in human power and false security rather than in God's provision and protection.
- **What is the significance of the "foundation stone" mentioned in Isaiah 28:16, and how does the New Testament interpret it?**
- The "foundation stone" symbolizes the only true security, which is faith in God's provision. Vannoy suggests it's a veiled Messianic reference pointing towards the Messiah. The New Testament explicitly applies this verse to Jesus Christ, identifying him as the cornerstone and emphasizing that those who believe in him will not be ashamed or dismayed. Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:6 are cited as examples.

- **How does Isaiah 28:23-29 use the analogy of a farmer to explain God's actions?**
- This passage uses the farmer's varied methods of plowing, planting, and harvesting as an analogy for God's dealings with His people. Just as a farmer doesn't plow forever, God doesn't remain in one stage of dealing with His people indefinitely. He moves through different phases, including judgment and restoration. The different ways the farmer treats different crops suggests that God deals differently with those inside and outside of His covenant. He may chastise his people but will not utterly destroy them.
- **What is "Ariel" in Isaiah 29:1, and what will happen to it?**
- "Ariel" is generally understood to be a symbolic name for Jerusalem or Zion. Though the etymology is debated, the context suggests it means "hearth" or "fireplace" of God. Isaiah prophesies that Ariel will be besieged and brought low, suffering under God's judgment. However, this destruction will not be total or everlasting. God promises to intervene and protect Judah, causing its enemies to fail.
- **How does Isaiah 29:9-12 describe the spiritual condition of the leaders of the land?**
- These verses depict the leaders as spiritually blind and drunk, not literally with wine, but with apathy and indifference towards God's word. They have access to the "scroll" (God's Word) but refuse to read or understand it, offering excuses and demonstrating a deep sleep of spiritual ignorance and disinterest.
- **What is the meaning of the "Lebanon turned into a fertile field" imagery in Isaiah 29:17, and what does it imply about God's future plans?**
- This is a key interpretive point. Vannoy argues it represents a reversal of status: Lebanon, representing the Gentiles outside the covenant, will become a fertile field, signifying their inclusion among God's people. Conversely, the "fertile field," representing Israel, will be esteemed as a forest, suggesting a temporary removal from God's special favor. This hints at God's plan to bring Gentiles into the covenant, a concept further developed in verses 18-24. However, J. Barton Payne presents an alternative view, that Lebanon becoming a fruitful field signifies Assyria's reduction to weakness while Israel becomes more powerful (the fruitful field being esteemed as a forest).

- **According to Vannoy's interpretation, how does Isaiah 29:18-24 describe the inclusion of Gentiles and the eventual restoration of Israel?**
- Vannoy interprets these verses as depicting the fulfillment of the imagery in verse 17. The "deaf" (Gentiles) will hear the words of the scroll, and the "blind" will see, signifying their spiritual awakening and inclusion in God's covenant. The humble will rejoice, and the ruthless will vanish, indicating a weakening of evil's influence. Eventually, the Jews who were wayward will gain understanding, suggesting a future restoration, possibly paralleling Paul's olive tree analogy in Romans 11.