

Woe to Efrayim ~ Part 1 Yesha'yahu 28:1-13

In my last post, we completed exploring **The Lord's Judgment of the Whole Earth ~ Part 6** in **Yesha'yahu 27:1-13**. In this post, we move on to more woes over the next six chapters starting with **Woe to Efrayim ~ Part 1** in **Yesha'yahu 28:1-13**.

As mentioned above this is the first woe in chapters 28-33 (29:1,15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1). The effect of the prophecy is to announce, in this case, the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** (called by the name of its major tribe **Efrayim**), is as good as dead. **Efrayim's** in trouble. Once a beautiful flower, now in **Yesha'yahu's** day, they were fading fast. They were proud and pompous no doubt due in part to the fact that they were overcome with wine.

¹ Woe to the haughty crown of Efrayim's drunks, to the fading flower of its proud splendor, located at the head of the rich valley belonging to people overcome by wine!

The **haughty crown** of **Efrayim** may be a reference to its capital city Samaria, which sat atop a large hill overlooking the area.

Garland worn by revelers is usually a sign of joy and happiness. In this instance, however, it is a **fading flower** as the party turns sour and drunkenness presages the destruction of the city of **Samaria** by the **Ashurim** in 722 BCE.

² Adonai has someone strong and powerful. He comes like a hailstorm, a destructive tempest, like a flood of water, rushing, overwhelming; with his hand, he hurls them to the ground.

Someone seems to be a **theophany**. A **theophany** is a visible manifestation of **Adonai** to humankind. To indicate the power of **Adonai**, this encounter generally includes such things as smoke and fire, mighty winds and storms, and earthquakes.

³ The haughty crown of Efrayim's drunks is trampled underfoot; ⁴ and the fading flower of its proud splendor, located at the head of the rich valley, is like the first ripe fig of summer— whoever sees it picks and eats it.

Appealing again to the images of a **haughty crown** and **fading flower** from verse 1, **Yesha'yahu** describes the devastating punishment coming on **Efrayim**. He adds the picture of the **first ripe fig** ready to be plucked and devoured.

An **Ashurim** invasion was imminent. It was ominous. Were **Adonai's** people praying? Doubtful. Instead, they were partying.

⁵ On that day, Adonai-Tzva'ot will be a glorious crown, a brilliant diadem for the remnant of His people. ⁶ He will also be a spirit of justice for whoever sits as a judge, and a source of strength for those repelling enemy attacks at the gate.

Recall that **on that day** implies a later time. While the **glorious crown** of **Efrayim** will be **trampled underfoot**, **Adonai Himself** will become a **glorious crown, a brilliant diadem for the remnant of His people**. Inspired by **Adonai**, judges will again be just, and soldiers will still have the strength to defend their city.

While verses 1-6 criticize the nobility for their drunken behavior, the following section focuses on the priests and prophets.

⁷ But there are others reeling from wine, staggering about because of strong liquor; cohen and prophet reel from strong liquor, they are confused by wine. Led astray by strong liquor, they err in their visions and stumble when judging. ⁸ All tables are covered with vomit and feces; not a single place is clean.

The ***cohen*** and ***prophet*** were crucial to the spiritual leadership of the nation, but here they had clouded their thought with drinks. They had drunk so much alcohol that their ***tables are covered with vomit and feces***. I must confess that is the first time that I have spotted ***feces*** mentioned in Scripture. Most English translations use filthiness. However, according to Strong's, the Hebrew word can also be translated as dung. So, there's that.

⁹ Can no one be taught anything? Can no one understand the message? Must one teach barely weaned toddlers, babies just taken from the breast, ¹⁰ so that [one has to use nursery rhymes]? — Tzav la-tzav, tzav la-tzav, kav la-kav, kav la-kav z'eir sham, z'eir sham [Precept by precept, precept by precept, line by line, line by line, a little here, a little there].

These decadent leaders were acting as if they were teaching babies and not adults. The content of their teaching was mocked. What they said was repetitive and meaningless.

In 2 Timothy 4:3, we read that in the last days, Believers will have ***itching ears***, wanting to hear new doctrine. As a safeguard against strange doctrine that will lead us into error, we must study the Word line upon line, precept upon precept. Here a little, there a little, we must learn the Word for ourselves.

¹¹ So with stammering lips, in a foreign accent, [Adonai] will speak to this people.

During this indictment against people who were no longer interested in learning the Word, **Adonai** said, *"I'm going to speak to them through a people of stammering lips and a foreign tongue."* Who would these people be? The **Ashurim**. If **Isra'el** wouldn't learn in the Word, she'd learn in war.

In the Book of Acts 2:4-6, we see an intriguing parallel to this verse. In **Yesha'yahu's** day, **Adonai** used foreigners to speak to His people. On **Shavuot** (Pentecost), He would use His people to speak to foreigners.

¹² He once told this people, "It's time to rest, the exhausted can rest, now you can relax"- but they wouldn't listen. ¹³ So now the word of Adonai for them comes "precept by precept, precept by precept, line by line, line by line, a little here, a little there," so that when they walk, they stumble backward, and are broken, trapped and captured! ~ Isaiah 28:1-13 (CJB)

In my next post, we conclude the **Woe of Efrayim** in **Yesha'hayu 28:xx-29**.