

Woe to Efrayim ~ Part 2 Yesha'yahu 28:14-29

In my last post, we explore a series of Woes, beginning with **Woe to Efrayim ~ Part 1** in **Yesha'yahu 28:1-13**. In this post, we move on to **Woe to Efrayim ~ Part 2** in **Yesha'yahu 28:14-29**.

The prophecy now shifts its focus from the northern kingdom to the southern.

14 So listen to the word of Adonai, you scoffers, composing taunts for this people in Yerushalayim:

Scoffers were those who did not fear **Adonai** and who made fun of those who did (see Proverbs 1:22; 9:7-8,12; 13:1).

15 Because you said, "We made a covenant with death, we made a contract with Sh'ol. When the raging flood passes through, it will not touch us. For we have made lies our refuge and hid ourselves in falsehoods"-

The rulers of **Y'udah** had entered a dangerous agreement. The agreement is said to be with **death** and **Sh'ol**. **Sh'ol** refers to the grave and in some contexts signifies the underworld. **Yesha'yahu** probably referred to treaties with foreign nations to try to keep **Ashur** from defeating them.

16 therefore here is what Adonai Elohim says: "Look, I am laying in Tziyon a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, a firm foundation-stone; he who trusts will not rush here and there.

But it was not foreign alliances that made **Y'udah** strong. It was their relationship with **Adonai**. He was the One who had built the cornerstone and foundation. Kefa declares that this verse speaks of **Yeshua**: ***For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."*** 1 Peter 2:6 (NIV)

There's a great temptation for us to want some quick fix, some program, some plan to see us through, to help us out. "Lord," we cry, "show us the way." And **Yeshua** answers, "It's not something I give to you. It's Me. I Am the Way."

17 I will make justice the plumb line and righteousness the plumb-bob; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, water will overflow the hiding place,

Adonai's standards are **justice** and **righteousness** - fair treatment of fellow citizens and trusting obedience. Both were lacking in **Y'udah**.

18 your covenant with death will be annulled, and your contract with Sh'ol will not stand. When the raging flood passes through, you will be trampled down by it.

The dark pact with **death** and **Sh'ol** is doomed to failure.

19 As often as it passes through, it will take you, for it will pass through every morning, day after day, night after night; understanding the message will be sheer terror." ²⁰ ***For, [as the saying goes,] "The bed is too short for a person to stretch, and the blanket too narrow [to protect him from cold] even if he crams himself in."***

The arrangements that **Y'udah** had made to protect itself against **Ashur** were inadequate, like a bed that was too short. The same is still valid. If you're making finances, friends, or philosophy your rest and security, you're going to be short-sheeted because it won't be as secure as you think. ***Come to me, all of you who***

are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest." ~ Matthew 11:28 (CJB). That's why I became a Believer. All other beds are too short.

²¹ For Adonai will arise, as at Mount P'ratzim, and storm with rage, as in the Giv'on Valley; so He can do His deed, His strange deed, and perform His task, His alien task.

Mount P'ratzim, known as **Ba'al P'ratzim** in 2 Samuel 5:18-20, commands the heights above the **Valley of Refa'im** (Joshua 15:8). Although its exact location is unknown, the text suggests that it is just northwest of **Beitlechem**, near **Yerushalayim**. At **P'ratzim**, **Adonai** gave David a great victory over the Philistines. At the **Valley of Gi'von**, **Adonai** used hailstones to allow **Y'hoshua** to defeat the southern coalition of **Kena'ani** city-states (Joshua 10:11). Though this prophecy and many of **Yesha'yahu's** others describe **Adonai's** violent judgment against the nations, here it is called *strange* and *alien*. It was not the typical, ordinary, hoped-for mode of relationship, particularly with His covenant people.

²² Therefore, now, stop your scoffing, or your bonds will be further tightened; for I have heard from Adonai Elohim-Tzva'ot that destruction is decreed for the whole land.

Though **Adonai's** judgment against the *scoffing* leaders of **Y'hudah** is absolute, their future behavior will determine whether it becomes even worse (*your bonds will be further tightened*).

In verses 23-29, **Yesha'yahu** drew an analogy between a *farmer's* task and **Adonai's** treatment of **Y'hudah**. Good results come from different actions and different methods applied at different times. The same thing is true spiritually. We must handle situations with different people carefully - not depending on programs or formulas, but accurately discerning what **Adonai** would have for us in the tilling of the soil, in the planting of the seed, and in the gathering of the harvest He promised is sure to come. The passage has the feel of a parable.

²³ Listen and hear my voice; pay attention, and hear what I say: ²⁴ Does a farmer sowing keep plowing forever? Does he never stop breaking up and harrowing his land? ²⁵ No - when he finishes leveling it, he scatters his dill-seed, sows his cumin, puts wheat in rows, barley where it belongs, and plants buckwheat around the edges; ²⁶ because his Adonai has taught him this, has given him instruction.

Two sowing strategies are employed here. *Dill-seed* and *cumin* were broadcast by hand. This was done in the freshly plowed furrows after the first rains. *Wheat, barley, and buckwheat* had to be handled more carefully to avoid mixing the seed. The *farmer* does not just keep plowing; he also sows seed. He places the various seeds in their separate places. This order comes from **Adonai** Himself.

²⁷ Dill must not be threshed with a sledge or cartwheels driven over cumin; rather, dill one beats with a stick and cumin with a flail.

Each plant has its proper treatment. The analogy may point to the fact that **Adonai** exercises His judgment against sinners in a way that is appropriate to their specific situation.

²⁸ When crushing grain for bread, one doesn't thresh it forever; one drives the horse and cartwheels over it but doesn't crush it to powder. ²⁹ This too comes from Adonai-Tzva'ot — his counsel is wonderful, his wisdom great. ~ Isaiah 28:14-29 (CJB)

No bread can be made if the *farmer* performs only one of his tasks. Therefore, it is necessary to bring the harvested grain to the threshing floor, where it can be crushed and further by running a threshing-sled over it. The *cartwheels* mentioned here was a typical wooden device with two or more rows of wheels affixed. Once

the grain had been separated from the stalks, it had to be winnowed, sieved and then given to the women to be crushed on grinding stones to make the fine flour used for baking.

In my next post, we explore the **Woe to Ari'el (Yerushalayim) ~ Part 1** in **Yesha'hayu 29:1-12**.