

Sermon #89 — *Isaiah Series*

Title **“THEY WOULD NOT HEAR”**

Text: Isaiah 28:1-13

Subject: *God’s Care of His Church*

Date: Sunday Morning — June 23, 2019
 Bible Class

Introduction:

I want to make three statements, by way of introduction, that will lay the foundation for my message. I hope you will write them down and frequently meditate upon them throughout the days of your life. These three statements will pave the way for everything else I have to say to you in this message.

1. **The greatest privilege the Lord God can bestow upon anyone in this world is the privilege of hearing his Word, the privilege of hearing a man faithfully preach the gospel of his free, sovereign, saving grace in Christ.**

The greatest blessing God ever gave to any man, any woman, any community is the blessing of a faithful gospel ministry.

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- A Gospel Church.
- A Gospel Preacher.

If God has given you the privilege of hearing his Word, he has given you the means of grace (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25). If God has given you the privilege of hearing his Word, he has given you the opportunity...

- To know the Living God.
- To be Saved by His Grace.
- To Know His Will.
- To be Fed with Knowledge and Understanding.
- To find Comfort and Rest for your Weary Soul.

Every believer ought to cherish the privilege of sitting under and being a part of a faithful, gospel ministry. This is the ascension gift of Christ to his people (Ephesians 4:8-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

2. **The greatest curse God can ever bring upon anyone this side of hell is to remove the light of his Word and silence the voice of his preacher.**

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God never leaves himself without a witness. But he does take his light away from those who refuse to walk in it and give it to others. When God refuses to speak, when God silences the voice of his prophet, when God stops the mouth of his preacher, men and women are left to themselves, to grope about in the darkness of religion without God!

- The 400 Years of Silence
- The Blindness of Israel
- *“I will remove thy candlestick out of his place”*
(Revelation 2:5).

Illustration: John Bunyan’s 12 Years in Bedford Jail.

3. **The greatest responsibility ever placed upon a man is the responsibility of the Word of God, the responsibility of preaching the gospel.**

It is my responsibility to preach the gospel in the name of God, as God’s ambassador, to eternity bound men and women! This is God’s word to me: *“He that hath my word, let him speak my word*

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faithfully” (Jeremiah 23:28). If I fail to do so, God will hold me responsible for your blood. Their *“blood will I require at thine hand”* (Ephesians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 1 Timothy 4:16). That is an awesome, heavy, heavy responsibility.

But you who hear the gospel also have an awesome weight of responsibility. It is your responsibility to obey the Word of God. God will hold you responsible for every gospel sermon you ever heard, or had an opportunity to hear (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). If you do not obey the gospel, in the Day of Judgment you will be judged by the gospel.

ISAIAH 28

Now, with these things in mind, I want us to read the first 13 verses of Isaiah 28 together — Isaiah 28:1-13. This is Isaiah’s prophecy of God’s judgment upon Ephraim, the ten northern tribes of Israel. It speaks of the time when Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, would be sent as an instrument of God’s wrath upon Ephraim to destroy the kingdom of

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Ephraim. — Have you found my text — Isaiah 28:1-13? Read it with me.

(Isaiah 28:1-13) Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (3) The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: (4) And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up. (5) In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, (6) And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. (7) But they also have

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erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment. (8) For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is* no place *clean*. (9) Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. (10) For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: (11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (12) To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (13) But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

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Here is the reason why God destroyed Ephraim. — **“THEY WOULD NOT HEAR!”** What an indictment! God sent them his Word. *“Yet they would not hear!”*

Proposition: Because they would not hear the Word of God, God destroyed Ephraim in the day of his anger.

Divisions: I call your attention to 5 things clearly revealed in these thirteen verses. Give me your attention. These things have been written in the Book of God for our learning and admonition.

1. The Equity and Justice of Divine Judgment (vv. 1-4).
2. The Abundance of God’s Grace (vv. 5-6).
3. The Sovereignty and Freeness of God’s Mercy (vv. 7-8).
4. The Method of Divine Instruction (vv. 9-11).
5. The Responsibility of Obedience to the Word of God (vv. 12-13).

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DIVINE JUDGEMENT

1st — **God’s prophet calls our attention to the equity and justice of divine judgment** (vv. 1-4).

(Isaiah 28:1-4) Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (3) The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: (4) And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

God had been good to Ephraim. He had given Ephraim the richest most fertile land of Canaan. He

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had given them his Word, his ordinances, his prophets, and his priests. But Ephraim despised God’s goodness, and refused his Word, and polluted his ordinances. Therefore God determined to destroy Ephraim.

Divine judgment is always a matter of just retribution. It is God dealing with people according to their sins. — The greater the sin, the greater the judgment (Matthew 11:20-24).

Ephraim had become puffed up with pride. Therefore God was determined to cast her down. There is nothing that God hates like he hates pride. Those who exalt themselves, God will abase. Those who lift themselves up, God will cast down. Pride is the forerunner of destruction.

Ephraim had become intoxicated with the wine of idolatry. Therefore God gave Ephraim up to a reprobate mind. I have no doubt that the inhabitants of Ephraim were guilty of drunkenness in a literal sense. But the drunkenness for which God destroyed

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the nation was idolatry (Hosea 4:17). This is the drunkenness for which God destroys men and nations today (Revelation 17:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

The wine of Babylon is the doctrine of Babylon.

- The Degradation of God
- The Exaltation of Man
- 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-17

God’s judgment upon Ephraim was a remarkable work of providence.

- It was God’s sovereign work. — Shalmaneser was God’s strong one!
- It was God’s sudden work. — “*A Flood*” — “*A Hail Storm*”
- It was God’s swift work. — Shalmaneser gobbled up Ephraim like a man hastily picking grapes and eating them.
- It was God’s thorough work.

ABUNDANT GRACE

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2nd — **Isaiah proclaims the abundance of God’s grace, his free, saving grace for sinners in Christ**
(vv. 5-6).

(Isaiah 28:5-6) In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, (6) And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” (Romans 5:20). And we have an example of God’s super-abounding grace in these two verses. In wrath God remembered mercy. He showed the severity of his justice in the destruction of Ephraim. Now he shows the goodness of his grace in the preservation of Judah.

Judah, here called “the residue of his people,” was God’s elect from among the fallen nation. When Ephraim was carried away into Assyrian bondage, God gave his favor to Judah, during the days of

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Hezekiah and Josiah. During that time the Lord God was the glory and the beauty of his people. And he gave those two godly kings of Judah the spirit of judgment and strength, to rule his people and to conquer their enemies. But this prophecy speaks of One greater than Hezekiah and Josiah. This is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great King of kings.

There is, among the fallen sons of men, a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:5-6). This elect remnant is *“the residue of his people,”* chosen by the Lord God himself in everlasting love and foreordained to eternal life in Christ before the worlds were made (John 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

The Lord Jesus Christ himself, “the LORD of hosts,” is the glory and beauty of his people (Ezekiel 16:6-14).

- He washed us in his blood.
- He sanctified us by his Spirit.
- He rules us in his righteousness.

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- We are complete in him (Colossians 2:9-10).

And Christ shall be to us for “a Crown of Glory” in eternity. The Bible promises crowns to God’s elect, whereby we shall be crowned in eternity. We are told that there is a crown of life, a crown of rejoicing, an incorruptible crown, a crown of righteousness, and a crown of glory. All these crowns are all found in the Person of our dear Savior. Christ is our Crown of Glory. Christ is our Diadem of Beauty.

Let me say it one more time — **There are no degrees of reward in heaven.** Those who teach such a doctrine speak in direct contradiction to the gospel of the grace of God. **How can there be any degrees of reward in heaven? How can there be any crowns and rewards earned by us...**

- If all that we do is marred by sin? — Will the holy God reward sin?
- If there are no sorrows in heaven? — Would not the loss of reward constitute sorrow?

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- If our basis of acceptance with God is Christ alone? — Are we only partially accepted in Christ?
- If salvation is altogether grace? — Is the fullest revelation and enjoyment of salvation dependent upon our works?
- If God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places from eternity? — Did God forget something? — Did God leave something out?

Here is the abundance of God’s grace. — Grace chose us. Grace put us in Christ. And grace has made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17; John 17:1, 5, 22).

And Christ, who is our Glory and Beauty, is our everlasting King.

- He rules in the spirit of wisdom!
- He rules in the strength of omnipotence!

SOVEREIGN MERCY

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3rd — **In verses 7 and 8, the prophet speaks of the sovereignty and freeness of God’s mercy.**

(Isaiah 28:7-8) But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment. (8) For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is no place clean.*

The men of Judah were just as vile and guilty as the men of Ephraim. They had committed the same crimes. They had profaned the ordinances of God with the vomit of superstition and the excrement of idolatry, through the drunkenness of will worship, just as fully as the men of Ephraim. **What was the difference between Ephraim and Judah? God chose Judah! God was merciful to Judah!**

- Grace is sovereign!
- Grace is free!
- Grace is unconditional!

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- And grace is distinguishing!

(1 Corinthians 4:7) For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

GOD’S INSTRUCTION

4th — **The method of divine instruction is displayed in verses 9-11.**

(Isaiah 28:9-11) Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. (10) For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: (11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

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God will teach none but the humble (v. 9; Matt. 11:25-26; 19:14). — “Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” (v. 9).

God teaches his children with care. — “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (v. 10).

- Divine instruction is simple and clear.
- Divine instruction is progressive.
- Divine instruction is repetitious.

God teaches his children by the most unlikely teachers (v. 11; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; 2 Corinthians 4:7).

(Isaiah 28:11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

OBEDIENCE REQUIRED

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5th — **In verses 12 and 13, we are shown our responsibility — The Responsibility of Obedience to the Word of God — Our responsibility.**

(Isaiah 28:12-13) To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (13) But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

When God, by his servants, instructs men in his Word, he calls them to rest in Christ (Matthew 11:28). The knowledge of Christ, and the blessed doctrine of the gospel, the message of God’s free, sovereign, saving grace in his Son, is rest and peace for weary sinners.

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When God’s servants speak his Word, by the power of his Spirit, God speaks by them. — “*To whom he said.*”

Those who stumble at the Word of God through unbelief, being disobedient to it, shall be condemned by it (Matthew 21:44; 1 Peter 2:8). If the gospel is not a savor of life unto life to you, it will be to you a savor of death unto death.

APPLICATION

God will not trifle with men and women who trifle with his Word. Ephraim was cut off because “*they would not hear.*” Israel was cast away because “*they would not hear.*” — God will not trifle with men and women who trifle with his Word (Proverbs 1:23-33).

(Proverbs 1:23-33) Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have

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set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: (30) They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. (31) Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (32) For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (33) But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Amen.