



Isaiah 27-28

Tape #7254
Isaiah 27-28
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Ezekiel, chapter twenty seven, as we continue our journey through the Bible. Ezekiel, Isaiah, chapter twenty seven. My Bible opened to Ezekiel, and I just, you know, saw Ezekiel, and that was it! But, Isaiah. I'm really here!

Now as you know in the original, there were no chapters or verses. In fact, in the original there weren't even spaces between the words. So they had to first of all figure out where one word ended, and the next word began. There were no, the letters were just written without any spaces between. They were first translated and then later on, because people wanted to reference particular portions of the scripture, they separated them into chapters and verses, for convenience sake. So that you could look up a particular passage, say, "Oh that's chapter twelve, verse nineteen." You could look up a passage, because you had the passages divided into chapters, and verses. That's just for convenience of reference. Rather than saying, "Well, it's about the middle of Isaiah", you know, and have to really search a long ways. It narrows down, and helps tremendously. But, though all scripture is given by inspiration of God, I do not know that that holds true for the separation of the chapters, and verses. That was something done by man, in order to aid a person in their study of the Bible, and in referencing various passages.

Now when we read, in our western mind, we're accustomed to reading a chapter at a time. When we come to the end of a chapter, we think, "Well that's the end of the chapter". We're not thinking in consecutive order, as it was originally written. Just continuing right on in a consecutive order. So our minds have the tendency of beginning now, a new chapter, and we think that we're beginning a whole new venture, or whole new thought. We don't often times relate it to the previous verses that we've just read. A lot of times, because of this, it's hard to catch up speed when you start a new chapter.

Tonight is one of those cases where without the last two verses of the previous chapter, just starting to read chapter twenty seven, you can find yourself in confusion, and wonder, "What is he talking about? It seems like he's talking about two different things, and they don't quite line up! That's exactly what he is doing. He's talking about two different things!" unless you have the key in the last two verses of the previous chapter, you don't understand what he's talking about.

So to begin chapter twenty seven, we need to begin with chapter twenty six, verse twenty and twenty one, where God is saying to His people, "Enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the tribulation, or indignation be over. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: and the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Now throughout the Bible, it tells us of a period of time in which God's judgment is going to fall upon the earth. The book of Revelation devotes the majority of that book to this subject. There is a seven year period of time that is yet to be fulfilled, in which God will be dealing primarily, and predominantly with the nation of Israel, as far as reaching out to them for salvation. At the present time the Spirit of God is working among the Gentiles. Blindness has happened to Israel in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. So God is working now among the Gentile nations. The Holy Spirit for the most part, is working among the Gentiles.

But God will work among the Jews once again. It will be a seven year period of time, it will begin when God destroys Russia in their invasion of the Middle East, and especially the area of Israel. When they get into the mountains of Jerusalem, and God manifests His power and destroys this invading army, at that time, He will put His Spirit upon Israel once more. God's time clock which has been shut down for almost two thousand years, will begin to tick again. God's final seven year cycle will take place.

Now this period is divided into two segments, about half way in each. For the first three and a half years the Jewish people will, for the most part, be deceived by the Antichrist. Because the first thing he will do is

make a covenant with them, and no doubt with this covenant, he will grant them the right to rebuild their temple. Thus this will be the sign to them that he is the Messiah.

You talk to the Orthodox Jews today, and you find out that they are looking for their Messiah, they are waiting for their Messiah, and if you ask them, "How will you know he is the Messiah?", they will tell you, "He will lead us in the rebuilding of our temple." That's what the Antichrist is going to do. Jesus said, "I came in my own name", I mean, "I came in my Father's name, you did not receive me, there's another that is coming in His own name, Him you will receive." So they will be deceived.

But, after the temple is rebuilt, and they begin the worship within the temple again, the daily prayers, and sacrifices, three and a half years after the covenant is made to rebuild the temple, it has been completed and they inaugurate again, the sacrifices, he will come to the temple of God, and he will stand in the Holy of Holies, and proclaim that he is God, and he will be, he will demand to be worshiped as God. He will stop the daily prayers and the sacrifices. He will set an image of himself in the Holy of Holies.

At this point, Jesus warned the Jews to flee to the wilderness, where according to Revelation, God has a place prepared for them, where God will watch over them, and take care of them for three and a half years. That is what verse twenty is talking about here in Isaiah chapter twenty six. Where he said, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a short while, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

Now this final three and a half years of this seven year cycle, will be a time of great tribulation upon the earth, greater than the earth has ever known before. Because God's judgment and God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth because of man's sin, and man's rebellion against God. There are many passages of scripture that relate to the things that will be happening during the time that God's judgment is being poured out upon the earth.

Daniel says, "It will be a time of great tribulation, such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again." Jesus repeats what Daniel has to say, as He talks about the great tribulation at this time. In the book of Revelation, beginning with chapter six, with the opening of the scroll with the seven seals, and the corresponding judgments upon the earth, on through the trumpet judgments, and through chapter eighteen, you find all of these judgments that will be poured out on the earth in this three and a half year period of time. They will, there will be cataclysmic judgments. The earth will be shaken, the whole earth. It will be moved out of its place. There will be gigantic hailstones, there will be all kinds of calamities that will be transpiring upon the earth during this period of time, which you can read Revelation six, through eighteen, and get the gory details of what will be going on when God's judgment is poured out upon the earth.

"For", in verse twenty seven, "behold the Lord comes out of His place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." So God is dealing with His protection for His people the Jews, at that time. But He's also dealing with the judgment that will be poured out against the nations of the world. The Antichrist's forces, and those forces of darkness which control the earth today.

So as he goes into chapter twenty seven, verse one is linked with the last verse of the previous chapter. If you did not have the chapter distinctions, all of this explanation wouldn't be necessary, because you'd just read the next verse, not stopping when you came to the end of the chapter. You would've read, you would've read where, "The Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

And in that day (27:1)

What day? The day that the Lord is pouring out His judgment upon the earth, punishing the inhabitants upon the earth for their iniquity. "In that day"...

the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea (27:1).

Now it is quite possible that this is a reference to the Antichrist, and the false prophet, and Satan, who all will come in for judgment during this period of time. The serpent, leviathan, the crooked serpent, the piercing serpent, and the dragon. We know that these are all symbols for Satan. We do know that during this period of time, the Antichrist will be in control of the worldly powers, and he will have a false prophet that

will do his, actually sort of lead the people in the worship of the Antichrist. We know that the power of Satan will be unleashed upon the earth during this time also. So God is going to destroy these powers that have been destroying the earth.

Now, in the previous verse, He was talking about His protection for His people. "Come my people, enter into this place. Close the doors around you, and wait there until this indignation be overpast." In Revelation chapter twelve, we read concerning Israel that, "God will give to her wings of an eagle, to bear her to the wilderness place that He has prepared for her, where God will watch over and take care of her for three and a half years." So the Lord talking about the punishment that is gonna come upon the forces of darkness upon the earth, but then He returns to His people. Again He speaks of them in the figure of a vineyard.

Now we already have this figure of, of the vineyard back in chapter six of Isaiah, where God likens the nation of Israel to a vineyard. Here again, we return to this idea of God's people being as a vineyard.

And in that day sing ye unto her, [The people of God] a vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it (27:2-3);

That is, the vineyard. The word "keep" is watch over, or look over it, watch over it. In those days, their vineyards all had the watch towers. During the time when the grapes were getting ripe, they would go into the watch towers and watch the vineyards, first of all for people coming in and ripping off the grapes, and then also for the foxes that would come in and eat the grapes. So the Lord said, "I will watch over the people, my people, my vineyard."

and I will water it every moment: lest any should hurt it, and I will keep it night and day (27:3).

So God is talking about His people. He will be protecting them. He will be watching over them. He will keep them night and day.

Fury is not in me: for who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, and burn them together. [So God talks about His strength and power, and if they try to withstand God, you know, there's no chance.] Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me (27:4-5).

Now the prophet jumps to the, well, he's actually not jumping the last days, he's in the last days. But he's talking about these last day events in the nation of Israel, and he declares that...

He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit, or the face of the world (27:6).

Back in the 1800's the end of 1890's and so, there began what was known as the Zionist movement. At that time God began to put the desire in the hearts of many Jews to return to the land that was promised to their father Abraham. Here in the United States many of the wealthy Jews began to contribute to the Jewish fund. With the money that was collected, they began to purchase property in the land of Israel. At that time the plains of Sharon, which extend from the mountains of Ephraim to the Mediterranean, were swamp land, they were marsh swamp land, considered worthless. There were a lot of mosquitoes, malaria, and it was just swamp land. But the Jews came in and offered to buy the land from the Arabs, who thought, "Those crazy Jews!", and they laughed all the way to the bank, thinking they had really pulled one over on these Jews. "They're so anxious to own property in this land, they're willing to pay that kind of money for this worthless swampland!"

The reason why it was swampland is that through the years the silt that was brought into the Mediterranean from the flooding of the Nile river had settled in sand dunes along the Mediterranean coast. Thus, there were these huge sand dunes all along the coast of Israel. These sand dunes had actually dammed up all of the rivers and streams that usually flowed out to the Mediterranean. Thus it created this whole swamp valley of the plain of Sharon.

So once the Jews had brought the property, they then began to open up all of the rivers and the streams. They opened up the channels so that they could flow again into the Mediterranean. They removed all of these silt dams that had been built up, and they began to drain the swamp lands. They began to plant Eucalyptus trees, which drink up a great amount of water. Then between the Eucalyptus trees, they began to plant citrus trees. The citrus fruit that grew in the Sharon valley was some of the finest citrus fruit in the world! They began to ship this fruit out to Europe.

The valley of Megiddo was much the same. It was a large swampy area. They began to buy up property in the valley of Megiddo. Again they opened up the river on out to the Mediterranean and they gained a lot of marvelous farm land there in the valley of Megiddo. They began to plant it with wheat and with cotton, and other crops. It was very fertile, and gradually they began to reclaim the land. Of course they later on made the aqueduct that goes from the sea of Galilee, all the way down to the deserts around Beersheba. They began to plant these once desert areas, and the ground was very fertile. The crops were growing in tremendous crops.

So gradually Israel became an agricultural nation, until today, they that have come from Jacob have blossomed and budded, and they are filling the earth with fruit. This prophecy is being fulfilled. All through Europe you can find the fruit and the flowers that are grown in Israel. Down in the Jordan valley, in the wintertime, it's like our Imperial valley, so they grow tomatoes and cucumbers, and squash and all, there in the Jordan valley, all winter long! They then sell these crops in Europe.

So you can go to Europe and you can find the bananas, you can find the citrus fruits and all. You can find the flowers that are grown in Israel, and shipped to Europe. Israel is now the fourth largest nation in the world, of fruit export. It ranks number four in the world! This is a nation which size is about the state of New Jersey. Yet, the fourth largest fruit export in the world! So this prophecy of Isaiah has literally been fulfilled in our day, and is being fulfilled at the present time, as they fill the face of the world with fruit!

Now he goes on now to talk about His judgment against those nations that He used to judge Israel. God used the Assyrians as His instrument of judgment against the northern kingdom. He used the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment against the southern kingdom. The prophet asked...

Has he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? [So there were those that smote Israel, and has God smitten those, as He smote Israel through them.] and has he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? ["Did God get retribution against those nations that were used to take Israel and Judah into captivity?"] In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou will debate with it: and he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind (27:7-8).

Now don't ask me what that scripture means. I've been wrestling with it, and I don't have any answers. That's one of those scriptures that I have filed away that says, "Wait for further information". I've, I've read this, and I've looked at it, and I'm sorry, I, I just don't have a clue to what he's referring to there.

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be cleansed; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin (27:9);

Quite often husbands can be jerks. I mean they treat their wives like dirt! They don't pay any attention to them, they treat them very shabbily, they spend their time out with the guys. They, they don't say kind words, they don't compliment their wives, they just, they treat them like dirt. Many times the wives get so fed up with that, they say, "Hey who needs you? And who needs that kind of treatment?"

So the guy comes home, and he says, "Where's the paper?", and there's no answer. He goes out to the kitchen, there's no dinner being prepared. But there's a note that says, "See you later buddy I've had it!" You know, then they come down here and they say, "Romaine!" "Call my wife! Tell her I'm a changed man! I'm so sorry! I've been a jerk, I've treated her wrong! Call her up and tell her Romaine that I'm down here praying, and I've really changed!" Romaine will say, "You've made your bed man! Lie in it for awhile. You're a jerk!" "You don't have enough sense to get up in the morning! I'm not gonna call your wife. How do I know you've changed? Just cause you're down here crying and all. That doesn't mean you changed! Let me see something in your life that shows you've changed." And let her see something! In other words, you can't just say, "I'm a different man, I've changed honey! I'm a different man!" "Show me, let me see! Bring forth some fruit that demonstrates the changes."

That's what God is saying here. He's looking for certain fruit that demonstrates the change of their attitude, and of their hearts. You see, they had turned from God, and they had turned to idolatry. They were worshiping false gods. They were worshiping the sex goddesses. They were into pornography, and all of these other things. God is saying, "I want to see some fruit! I want to see demonstrated some fact that you have changed." The fruit that God was looking for was them to destroy their altars that they had made to these other gods. The images of these other gods that they had filled their houses with. So that's the kind of,

God said, “When I can see this fruit, I will know that they’ve really changed.”

when their altars they grind into chalk, chalkstones that are beaten into fine dust, and they have destroyed the images and the idols that they have made. Yet [He said] the defended city [because of their sin and their turning to these things, their defended city] will be desolate, they’re going to be taken into captivity, and their place where they dwell will be forsaken, it will be left like a wilderness: and in the city streets, the calves will feed, [In other words there will be, there won’t be people living there, it’ll just be a place where, where cattle and all sort of pasture in their cities.] and there he shall, shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. And when the boughs thereof are withered, [He’s talking about the strength of the nation, it’s withered.] they shall be broken off: the women will come and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour (27:9-11).

He’s talking here of the impending doom that is gonna come upon the northern kingdom of Ephraim, and it did follow within three years, this prediction was fulfilled upon Ephraim.

But it shall come to pass in that day, [And this again is that day, when God hides Israel, and He establishes them again, it shall come to pass in that day,] that the Lord shall beat off from that channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, [The channel of the river would, would be Euphrates, and unto the stream of Egypt.] and you will be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day that a great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem (27:12-13).

So this is that regathering of the people into the land that we see at the present time.

Chapter 28

Now in chapter twenty eight, he pronounces the woe upon Ephraim. That was the northern kingdom who turned immediately to idolatry. You remember when Solomon died, his son Rehoboam began to reign. The people came to Rehoboam from the north, the ten tribes in the north, and they said, “Your dad put heavy taxes on us, and they’re heavier than we can bear. We need tax relief.” The older men who had counseled his father Solomon said, “You better listen to them Rehoboam. It is true that you know your dad was making all these great buildings and everything, and he did overtax the people, and it’s time for tax relief. If you will relieve them, they will remain faithful to you.” But his young contemporaries said, “Hey man, if you give them this, then they’re gonna be wanting more, and there’s no end to it. So you gotta hang tough. Go out and hang tough.”

So he went out to hang tough. He said, “You think my dad was tough on you guys? You haven’t seen anything yet! I’m gonna lay on you greater taxes than even my dad did!”, and he talked very rough to them and they said, “Hey forget you man! To your tents O Israel!” The ten tribes to the north, revolted against Rehoboam, and they set up Jeroboam as their king.

Now Jeroboam figured that if they go back to Jerusalem every year to worship at the feast, and the three times a year, the feast of Passover, and Pentecost, and Tabernacle, as they go back to Jerusalem. He said, “If they go back and worship in Jerusalem, their hearts will soon be drawn back to the kingdom there.” So he set up a golden calf in Bethel, and another one in Dan. The southern most part, and the northern most part of the, of the kingdom of Israel. He set up these golden calves, and altars of worship, and he said, “These are your gods that delivered you out of Egypt”, and he introduced idolatry and calf worship immediately in the northern kingdom. As the result, the northern kingdom never did recover. It was never strong. It was always involved in idolatry, never did really serve God. So the northern kingdom, the chief tribe of the northern kingdom was the tribe of Ephraim, it was the major tribe, the largest tribe, and thus the northern kingdom is often referred to in the scriptures as Ephraim. So often when you read of Ephraim, it is a reference to the whole northern kingdom, as it is here.

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! (28:1)!

Ephraim is about to fall. As I said, within three years it did fall. But it is about to fall. It was a, a place of beauty. The, the valleys of, of the area of, of Ephraim were beautiful valleys! They are beautiful valleys

today. Very fertile valleys. The city where the capital of Samaria is. It's just beautiful, beautiful country.

There was this pride and all involved with the people. But worse than that, in the time of their national calamity, rather than facing the reality, they turned to, to drinking, and they became a drunken nation. Not facing up to the realities of life, but trying to just sort of put themselves in a state of blotto, so they don't have to think about the dangers that they're faced with, or the problems, or the calamities. They would just get bombed out on booze. So he, he's speaking to them.

Behold the Lord hath a mighty and a 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 his hand (28:2).

So God is going to bring the Assyrians, and they're gonna overflow the land like a storm. Mighty tempest, a destroying storm, a flood.

And the crown of pride, and the drunkards of Ephraim, they will trod under their feet: [So Ephraim is to fall to this storm that God is gonna bring against them.] 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 eats it up (28:3-4).

So they're gonna be gobbled up. Actually he's talking about the first ripe figs. Now if any of you have fig trees, you know that in a good year, you'll have ripe figs in June. That they, you'll get early figs and there are usually just a few of them. There are not many. This past year I had maybe six of these June figs. But they're the sweetest. They really are the, they're the sweetest. Then come August, you get lots of figs. You get your second ripe figs. But there was always the first ripe figs around June, which were very sweet. They looked forward to these first ripe figs. They would eat them, you know, they really looked for them to eat them quickly. He's talking about how Ephraim will be like that first ripe fig, that as soon as they grab it they eat it up.

And 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 (28:5),

There will be those faithful ones who will seek the Lord. This is always true. No matter how dark the world is, how deep it falls into sin, God always has His faithful remnant.

Now at the time when Elijah was a prophet, in Ephraim, the northern kingdom, and he had this contest with the prophets of Baal, four hundred prophets and priests of Baal. They came to mount Carmel, and they built their altars, and they asked Baal to light the fire, and it didn't happen. So about the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah said, "Okay you guys, step aside you've had your fun." Then he said, "Now Lord, you know, not for my sake, cause I know you're there, but for these people's sake, demonstrate that you are God, and send fire and you know, kindle the sacrifice and all." Fire came from heaven, and the sacrifice was consumed, the altar itself. The people said, "Jehovah is God!", and he took the prophets and priests of Baal down to the stream there, and he, and he killed all four hundred of them.

Then, Jezebel, the wife of the king heard of what Elijah did. She said, "God do more to me also if I don't get the head of that prophet!" So frightened by the threats of Jezebel, he began to run, until he came all the way down to the area of mount Sinai, and there he hid in a cave. You remember the story? There, God said, "Elijah what are you doing here?"

Now it is interesting that so often times when God asks us questions, we don't give Him a direct answer. Elijah didn't give Him a direct answer. He just said, "They have killed all of your prophets, and I, only I am left, and they're looking for me, to kill me! Lord you're just about out of business! You're in big trouble! You have only one prophet left, and they're after me!" The Lord again said, "What are you doing here?" But he still didn't get the question. Really, the answer is, "Nothing!", or "Hiding!" But, again he answered, and the Lord said, "Now look, I've got work for you to do. Get out of here. Get on up to Assyria, and anoint Benhadad, and you know, give him a job to do!" Then He said, sort of a post script, "And I have seven thousand in Israel, who have not bowed their knee to Baal. You're not alone man! I've got my remnant there. There are the faithful there."

This is always true, no matter how degraded a society may become, God always has His faithful remnant within that society. A lot of times we look at our city, and we say, "Nobody loves God!" God says, "Hey, hey. I've got my remnant here. There are those who do love me. There are those who are committed to me."

God always has that remnant. So God addresses the remnant here. Those that are faithful. "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty," a crown of beauty, "unto the residue of His people."

And for a spirit of judgment to him that sits in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate (28:5).

That is, God will be with those, and He will strengthen them, and they will turn the enemy on back to their gate. But, now he turns to Judah. Ephraim were drunk, they're about ready to be destroyed, but they're oblivious to it. They're, they're going on and just saying, "Hey we might as well live it up. We don't know what's gonna happen in the future, we might as well just live for today!"

But they [That is, the rulers in Jerusalem] also have erred through wine, [They were following the same pattern.] and through the strong drink, they are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink (28:7),

Now the priests were commanded not to drink wine or strong drink before they came into the temple of God to offer the sacrifices. But here they were getting drunk.

they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; and thus they err in vision, [The prophets are erring in the visions] and they, the priests and the rulers are stumbling in judgment (28:7).

Because of the alcoholism. It's a tragic thing that so many of our judges, and so many of our legislators are alcoholics. Tragic, because it causes you to err in judgment. God says...

For all of their tables are full of vomit [That is, there isn't a place on the table that isn't covered with vomit.] Whom shall he teach (28:9)?

Here's what they were saying, they were speaking in a sarcastic way concerning Isaiah, they said, "Who will he teach knowledge, who is Isaiah? Who is he to teach us? Where did he get his PHD?

whom shall he make to understand doctrine? ["We're the theologians, we're the graduates of Harvard", and basically they're saying, Elijah, I mean, "Isaiah you ought to go and teach kindergarten!"] those little children that have just been weaned from their mothers, and have just been taken away from the breasts (28:9).

In other words, "You are so simplistic. You actually believe the Bible. You actually believe that Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah. You don't understand the more technical aspects of theology!"

For your teaching is precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, there a little (28:10):

Using simple illustrations, and simple maxims and so forth for you instruction." This is really a putting down of Isaiah. But then he said...

For with stammering lips and another tongue he will speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: and yet they would not hear (28:11-12).

Now prophecy is an interesting thing because you can be dealing with a purely local event, but suddenly, there's a prophetic aspect to what is being said. In I Corinthians, chapter fourteen, as Paul is giving instruction concerning the use of the gift of tongues in the church. "And in the life of the believer", Paul quotes this and relates it as a prophecy that does relate to the gift of speaking in tongues. So as you read I Corinthians fourteen, and Paul's explanation of the use of the gift, the proper use of the gift of tongues, you will find that Paul quotes this passage from Isaiah. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people to whom He said, This is the rest whereby ye may cause the weary to rest."

Those who do have the gift of speaking in tongues tell of the rest that it gives to them in the exercise of the gift. Paul said that, "We don't always know how to pray as we ought." Because we don't always know what God's will is! "Therefore the Spirit will help our weaknesses, not understanding what the will of God is, he will make intercession through us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans, chapter eight. But then Paul also said, "For when I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, though my understanding is unfruitful." So now he is saying this is the rest.

Now many times, when praying for a friend, and praying over circumstances, and situations, I find that I have a problem, because I don't know exactly how to pray. They're going through severe financial problems. Is God using this to speak to them? Have they been careless in their relationship with God? Is God

wanting to get their attention, God wanting to speak to them? Or is Satan really raking them over the coals and giving them a bad time? Shall I pray that God you know, continue His work until the changes are wrought, that He wants to see in their lives? Or shall I pray that Satan will take away his hand, and that you know, they'll have the money to pay their bills? And it, it's hard, I, I wrestle sometimes with how to pray for my friends! Cause I don't know exactly what God is doing in their lives, and if God is wanting to use these circumstances for His good purposes, or if Satan is just really hassling them. Now if Satan is hassling them, then I want to come against Satan, and intercede for them. But if God is doing a work, then I don't want to pray against God in their lives! It becomes a problem.

It's a problem in my own life. "Lord are you wanting to teach me something? I want to learn! Or is this the enemy, just really giving me a bad time Lord? Then, get rid of him." In the morning when I wake up, if I'm not feeling up to sorts, I say, "Lord is this from you? If so I'll just stay in bed today. You can teach me what I want to teach me! Or is this the enemy? If so Lord, take it away!" He always takes it away, so I get up and go to work. Ha, ha! But we don't always know.

Now one thing you can know, if you pray exercising the gift of tongues, you can rest. It's according to the will of the Lord! So this is the rest for any cause is wherein to rest. When confused, we don't know exactly what God's purpose or plan is, those that have that gift, can exercise that gift in their prayer life, and they can know that they are praying and interceding for their friends, or for the situation, according to the will of God. So, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; this is the refreshing, for a refreshing experience, and yet" the Lord said, "They would not hear. For all of this they would not hear."

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they may fall and go backwards, [So it really is sort of, as Isaiah said in another place, "Hearing they do not hear, seeing they do not see, lest at any time they hear with their ears, and see with their eyes and be converted.", so they fall backwards,] *and they are broken, and trapped, and taken.* [So now to Judah, get the warning.] *Wherefore hear ye the word of the Lord, ye scornful men,* [Ye scornful men who are saying, "Who is he gonna teach? He ought to go back to babies that have been taken from their mother's breasts!", "you scornful men"] *that rule this people which are here in Jerusalem.* [Now to the leaders he addresses these remarks.] *Because you have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hid ourselves (28:13-15).*

This is what basically they were saying. They were being threatened with this Assyrian invasion. The Assyrians had wiped out Ephraim. They are being threatened by the Assyrian invasion. But while the Assyrians were besieging Samaria, it took them three years to take Samaria, while this was going on to their north, and the northern kingdom was falling, they sent their emissaries down to Egypt, to seek the help of the Pharaoh. They made these treaties with Egypt, where the Pharaoh promised to send up the Egyptians, to help them to fight off the Assyrians and all, and they were trusting in the promises that were made to them by the Pharaoh of Egypt. But the promises of help that he made, he was not able to fulfill. Thus, they were trusting in lies.

Now they said, "We have made this agreement with death." In other words, "Death can't, won't overtake us, because we have this agreement with Egypt. They're gonna come, and they're gonna deliver us. So we have this agreement with death, with hell, or the grave, we're in a covenant. We won't go to our graves." But the prophet is saying, "You know you're trusting in lies, the agreements that are made, and you're trying to find your refuge in lies. Under falsehoods you're trying to hide yourselves."

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: and he that believeth shall not make haste (28:16).

Now you're trusting in that which cannot deliver you. But I have laid in Zion for a foundation, something you can build upon, something that is sure. A precious stone." This is a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. Peter in writing his first epistle, quotes this passage of scripture. He said, "Unto you that believe", "He that believeth", He said, "shall not make haste", Peter said, "Unto you that believe our precious, our precious Lord Jesus. The foundation upon which we build our lives."

Now they were building their lives on lies. On an agreement, on a treaty with Egypt, which was going to

be broken. Actually, the Assyrians went down and wiped out the Pharaoh. He couldn't help them, and so they were trusting in the broken reed of Pharaoh, and it wasn't gonna happen. They had built their whole you know, premise on, "Egypt will deliver us!"

There are people today who are building their lives on lies, on false oaths, on false premises. It's tragic when a person builds his whole life on a lie. The lie that, "God does not exist". The lie of, "It doesn't matter how you live." People build their lives on philosophies. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I'll do my best. I'll live a good life, I'll live a moral life, and so I'm alright." Jesus said, "You must be born again." Only on Jesus Christ, He only is a solid foundation.

Now Jesus said that, "If you cast yourself upon the Rock, you will be saved. But if the rock falls on you..." "Fall upon the Rock, you'll be saved. If the Rock falls on you, He'll drag you to powder." So the, the invitation is to, God has laid for the sure foundation, even Jesus Christ, the precious Corner Stone, upon which our lives can be built. If you just put your life, cast your life on Christ, you'll be saved. But try to build on any other foundation, it's sinking sand, and you'll be lost. Religion can't save you, a church can't save you, only a faith in the living Jesus Christ can bring you salvation. "He that believeth shall not make haste." He said...

Judgment also will I lay to the line, righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies (28:17),

These lies that they're trusting in are gonna be swept away. Remember he talked about that storm that was gonna come? The hail, and the waters overflowing, verse two. So...

the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. ["You'll not be sustained by these treaties."] And your covenant with death will be disannulled, your agreement with hell will not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then you will be trodden down by it (28:17-18).

"You've trusted in a lying vanity, and when the storm comes you're gonna get wiped out." Jesus said, "There were two men who built houses. One was wise, one was foolish. The foolish man built his house upon the sand, and the storms came and the house built upon the sand collapsed. Great was the fall of it! But the wise man dug deep, and built his house upon the rock. When the storms came, the house that was built upon the rock stood." So he's talking here now about the, God has laid for a foundation in Zion a stone, a sure Corner stone. "Build your house upon that, and when the storm comes, you'll stand, you'll see it through!"

Believe me storm clouds are on the horizon of the world in which we live today! If you can't see that, you're blind! Storm clouds over the whole banking industry! I don't know why I do, but I read the business page everyday in the paper. It depresses me. Sort of a masochist I guess. But it's dismal! The storm is coming. But if you built your life upon Jesus Christ, I don't care how bad the storm, how high the water, you're gonna survive. You're gonna make it through, He will sustain you! But if you've built upon another foundation, it's gonna get swept away. You'll get swept away with it. The lies, the waters will overflow, sweep away the refuge of lies, the hiding places.

And from the time that it goes forth it will take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report (28:19). "Every time you read the paper, you'll find yourself vexed!" How true!

For the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on: and the covering is narrower than he can wrap himself in (28:20).

"You made this covenant you say, with death, with hell, you're in agreement. But man it's a short bed, it's got narrow blankets. You'll never be able to rest on that foundation." So we look at the things on which people seek to build their lives. They're short beds, with narrow blankets. You just can't rest.

For the Lord shall [raise, shall] rise up as in mount Perazim, and he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Now therefore do not mock, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts of a consumption that is determined upon the whole earth. [So he's warning them now of this consumption that God has determined.] So give ear, hear my voice; hearken, hear my speech (28:21-23).

“Hearken! God’s spoken to me, listen to me, I’m warning you!” So God always is faithful in warning a person. I must, I must say that. I look at my own life, and everyplace where I’ve stumbled, and gotten into trouble, God warned me before hand. God was faithful. Now I didn’t always listen to the warning. Every time I failed to take heed to the warning, got into trouble. God is faithful. He warns the people, but it’s necessary that we listen, and give heed. So here, the prophet is emphasizing, “I’ve heard from the Lord. Listen to what God has to say. Don’t mock, but give ear, hear my voice. Hearken, hear my speech!”

Does the plowman plow all day to sow? does he open and break the clods of the ground? When he has made plain the face thereof, does he not cast abroad the fitches, the seeds, and scatter the cummin, and the cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place (28:25-26)?

The farmer, when he goes out, and he, and he tills the ground, he has a purpose in mind. He, he plans to plant the ground. He doesn’t mix the seed. He doesn’t just take the rye, and the wheat, and the cummin and all, and just mix it up in a big thing, and just scatter it together. But he has the field for the wheat, the field for the barley, the field for the rye, the field for the spices, and he keeps them separated. There’s always that purpose in the mind of the farmer, as he plants the field, as he prepares the soil, as he plants the seed.

For God gives him discretion, instructs him, and he teaches him. [For there is a different way by which each of these is harvested.] The fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. [There’s a different way by which each of these is harvested.] And bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with the horsemen. This also comes forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working (28:26-29).

So “the Lord”, he is saying, “has prepared and is looking for a harvest”, and He uses discretion in His dealing with people. With different people, there are different ways! God doesn’t work with us all as a mob. God, God respects our individuality and our differences, and He’s very gracious that way. But the whole idea is, God is seeking for fruit to come forth from your life, and thus He is working with you, preparing your life, that He might plant the seed, that fruit might come forth. But working with you individually. Has a plan and a purpose for each of your lives.

It’s so important that we seek the Lord until we understand what His plan is for our life. For, when I get to the end of the road, there’s only one thing that is vitally important, and that is the fruit that I have to offer my Master. The fruit that He desires from me, that I fulfill the purpose of God for my life. That’s, that’s the only thing that counts.

When I, when I get to the end of the road, and I’m lying there in bed, and I take my last breath, and I wake up my wife as I pass on, and they pull the sheet over the top of me, at that point, there’s only one thing that will be of vital importance. Have I done God’s will? Have I brought forth fruit? Is God pleased and satisfied with me? When I face my Maker will He say, “Well done good and faithful servant! You’ve been faithful in the little things, and now I will make you ruler over many, enter into the joy of the Lord!”

With your life it’s the same thing! God has put you here for one purpose. There is different fruit to be brought forth from our different lives. He has a plan for you just like He has a plan for me. Now so many times we are so busy trying to work out our own plans, our own schemes, our own ambitions, that we spend our lives upon ourselves and we come to the end of our road, and we realize that it’s been a wasted life. “I have nothing to show the Lord of eternal value. I spent my whole time in myself, my self interests. I have nothing to offer to God in that day.” Tragic indeed! May it not be so. But may we, each one of us, bring forth the fruit that God is seeking from our lives, that we will receive His approbation of, “Good and faithful servant.”

Father we thank You for every opportunity You give us to know You, and to understand Your purpose. Lord, even as the prophet said, “I have heard from the Lord, listen to me, hear me!”, so Lord, may we have ears to hear what the Spirit would say to the church. May we examine ourselves Lord, the fruit of our lives, knowing that if we will judge ourselves, then we will not be judged of thee. Help us Lord that we might bring forth fruit, forty, sixty, a hundred fold, for Your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

And may 1991 be the year of great fruit bearing for the Lord! May we make our commitment to God, “Lord I’m gonna serve you! I’m gonna commit my life to doing your will. Lord lead me and guide me

according to your purpose, that I might bring forth fruit for your glory.” Jesus said that, “It is the purpose of God that you bring forth much fruit.” So may this be the year of bearing much fruit for Him.