

## **WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL AND EXCELLENT IN GUIDANCE (ISAIAH 28)**

The title for our message today is the last words written in **Isaiah 28**, of which we will get to shortly. It speaks of how we can put our whole-hearted trust in God, our Heavenly Father, in **counsel** and **guidance**. God gave His only-begotten Son, Jesus, who declared, **"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** (**John 14:6**) He then died on a cross for our sins, shed His precious blood for the remission of our sins, and then rose from the grave on the third day, conquering all things, death, sin, and evil, so that we too can have a victorious life, in Him, in His Name, through Him and for Him. We have been given the most wonderful of **gifts** by God, our Creator. His spoken and then written Word, His Holy Spirit that will guide us into all truth (**John 16:13**), other brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage us and uplift us in our faith, and praise God, we have salvation, eternal life, in Christ Jesus! Today, we are then reminded, that God is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance". We can put our whole-hearted trust in Him! We're not though, just getting saved and then going about our lives deciding for ourselves what we will do and how we will do it. We're also not depending on the wisdom that is of this world. As we are told, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (**1 Corinthians 3:19**) The Apostle Paul also sums it up for us in how we are to live our lives as children of God, in **Romans 8** saying, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [practicing righteousness vs. the practicing of unrighteousness/sin/wickedness/evil. As the Apostle John tells us, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." (**1 John 2:29**) Paul continues saying,] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For **you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear**, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be **glorified together.**" (**Romans 8:12-17**)

Two weeks ago we went over **Isaiah 25**, which Isaiah began with a praise to God saying, "O Lord [Yahweh], **You are my God**. I will exalt You [Lift Him up-How do we exalt God? By sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus, which we find that from the Great Commission (to which Jesus told His disciples, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."-**Matthew 28:18-20** and then the Great Commandment, by loving God with all of heart, soul, strength,

and mind and then also, loving others as ourselves (**Mark 12:30-31**)  
Isaiah then continued His praise to God in **Isaiah 25:**], I will praise  
Your name [yadah-with one's hands, not just with the lips-symbolic  
similarly to baptism, an outward expression of one's faith], for You  
have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are **faithfulness and  
truth.**" (**Isaiah 25:1**) It is of course no coincidence that God speaks  
the same Words regarding His "faithfulness and truth", in the last  
book in our canon of Scripture, the Holy Bible, in the book of  
**Revelation.** "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men ["for the Lord  
God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"-**Rev. 21:22**], and He will  
dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be  
**with them and be their God (Revelation 21:3)** [what we have now is  
just a slight similarity, a faint image of what is to come]. And God  
will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more  
death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the  
former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said,  
"Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these  
words are **true and faithful.** And He said to me, "It is done! [**"It is  
finished"**] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I  
will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who  
thirsts. **He who overcomes** [Greek word "nikon" (from "Nike") means  
overcomes, conquers, is victorious-to which WE claim "Victory in  
Jesus"], shall inherit all things, and **I will be his God and he shall  
be My son.** But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers,  
sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have  
their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is  
the second death." (**Revelation 21:1-8**) We can then see, that there is  
a clear distinction though between who is "a child of God" vs. those  
who are not. And praise God He is wonderful in counsel and excellent  
in guidance! "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;  
and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be  
called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince  
of Peace." (**Isaiah 9:6**)

After opening with a praise to God in **Isaiah 25**, Isaiah then records  
a prophetic word speaking of God vanquishing His enemies, yet at the  
same time Isaiah speaks of the great mercy and grace of our Lord,  
God, and Savior saying, "For You have been a strength to the poor  
[**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven."** (**Matthew 5:3**) which ties in with Jesus saying, "**But seek  
first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things  
shall be added to you."** (**Matthew 6:33**) As we sense the need for His  
Righteousness, we seek Him, and He is also], a strength to the needy  
in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for  
the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."  
(**Isaiah 25:1**) That victory (Nikon, Nike) that we have (is not in  
cameras or tennis shoes, or in any created thing) but is solely in  
Jesus, "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (**John 6:69**) Get the  
picture? We have another corroboration between the prophecies in

**Isaiah 25** with **Revelation**, where Isaiah says, "And He will destroy on this mountain [Mount Zion] the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. And it will be said in that day: "**Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.**" (**Isaiah 25:7-9**)

**Isaiah 26**, of which we looked at last Sunday, begins then with a "Song of Salvation" of the redeemed of God's people. It begins, "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth (**John 14:6**) may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.**" Isaiah then speaks of the fate of destruction of the prideful and wicked, those who practiced unrighteousness instead of righteousness. Then he speaks for the righteous saying, "Lord, You will establish peace for us, for **You have also done all our works in us.**" There is nothing we can do to earn salvation from God, yet we are called by God, as children of God, to live in and according to His Righteousness. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) Isaiah then speaks of God's people, as though they/we are going through the pains and pangs of giving birth to a child. Paul said as much saying, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now...eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (**Romans 8:18-23**)

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**Isaiah 28**

**Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem**

Woe to the crown of **pride**, to the **drunkards** of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant [shemen-fertile] valleys, to those who are overcome with wine! [Yes, they were "living large" as the saying goes] Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one [Assyria was that strong one to overthrow Ephraim which is a name given to Israel, and then later Bablyon, the Chaldeans, who overthrew Jerusalem, a name given to Judah], like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood

of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with His hand. [We are, even now, being reminded, that the battle belongs to the Lord. "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19) Isaiah 25:11 says, "And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their **pride** together with the trickery of their hands." Isaiah 26:4-6 says, "Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord [Yahweh], is everlasting strength. For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down—the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy." We continue in Isaiah 28:] The crown of **pride**, the **drunkards** of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot; and the glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valley, like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; he eats it up while it is still in his hand. [that speaks of God's judgment coming at a time least expected, when all is seemingly well, and it also speaks of those who live according to their greed, gluttony, selfishness, ever-consuming yet never being satisfied, concerning one's self alone, their pride.]

In that day the Lord of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people [there was and is always a remnant, of those in Israel and Judah and then also for us today in Christ. As was the same then, it is the same now, as Jesus stated, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)], for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filth; no place is clean. [That sounds harsh, but it is what it is. For anyone to operate as an ambassador for Christ, as Paul put it, not only is it important for us to be of sound mind, but we are a living testimony of Christ and His Righteousness. As Paul said, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20) That message will likely be not well-received if we are, as were the Ephraimites, operating in pride and drunkenness. Also, as we are told that drunkenness is dissipation or debauchery. (Ephesians 5:18) It is the Greek word "asotia" meaning "wantonness, profligacy, wastefulness" Profligacy means to be self-indulgent, dissipation, which for us basically means we are spiritually watered down, dissolved in our Christ-likeness.]

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." [God was saying that because "His people", so to speak, were complaining that God's ways were just one thing after another. God was telling them though that, as His people, it is from one moment to the next, one day upon another, day after day, week after week year after year. It was therefore up to them whether they wanted to do it God's way or their way which would lead to their demise.] For with stammering lips and another tongue he will speak to this people, to whom He said, "This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest," and, "This is the refreshing"; yet they would not hear. [Sound familiar? Jesus is still calling, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30) "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14)

But the word of the Lord was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little," that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught. Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves."

#### **A Cornerstone in Zion**

Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; [Jesus spoke of that Stone, that Rock of offense to some, saying, "Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." (Matthew 21:44)] **Whoever believes will not act hastily.** Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over, and by day and by night; it will be a terror just to understand the report." For the bed is too short to stretch out on, and the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it. For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon [David's victories]—that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual act. Now therefore, **do not be mockers, lest**

**your bonds be made strong;** for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a destruction determined even upon the whole earth.

**Listen to the Teaching of God** Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my speech. Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cummin and scatter the cummin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place? For He instructs him in right judgment, his God teaches him. For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; but the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, and the cummin with a rod. Bread flour must be ground; therefore he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horsemen. This also comes from the Lord of hosts, **who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.** ["Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct our paths." (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)]