

Isaiah 28:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. God ironically uses the mockers' own baby-talk (v.10) against them. Since they ridiculed His patient, incremental teaching, that same word becomes their judgment. The repetition **precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little** (identical Hebrew to v.10: tsav la-tsav...qav la-qav...ze'er sham ze'er sham) now carries ominous purpose: **that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken** (lema'an yelku ve-kashlu achor ve-nishbaru ve-noqshu ve-nilkadu, לִמְעַן יֵלְכוּ וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנִקְשְׁרוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ).

Five devastating verbs: go (aimlessly wander), fall backward (stumble in retreat), be broken (shattered), be snared (trapped like animals), be taken (captured/exiled). What was meant for blessing (patient instruction) becomes curse when rejected. The same sun that softens wax hardens clay. The same gospel that saves believers condemns rejecters (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). Romans 11:7-10 cites this principle—Israel's hardening through rejecting revelation. Jesus said parables both reveal and conceal (Matthew 13:10-15). God's word either sanctifies or hardens, depending on the heart receiving it.

Historical Context

Historically fulfilled when Assyria/Babylon invaded. Those who mocked Isaiah's warnings stumbled backward in defeat, were broken in battle, snared in sieges, taken into exile. Spiritually, this applies whenever people resist God's word—it becomes their condemnation. Pharaoh's hardening (Exodus 9:12, Romans 9:17-18) illustrates judicial hardening. The Pharisees rejected Jesus, so His teaching hardened them (John 12:37-40). Those who persistently reject truth eventually lose capacity to receive it (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). This is terrifying warning against mocking God's word.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How can the same Scripture that brings life to some bring hardening and judgment to others?
2. What does this verse warn about the consequences of persistently mocking or rejecting biblical teaching?
3. Have you seen people who once heard God's word clearly become progressively hardened through continued rejection?

Interlinear Text

לֵּהּ הַ	לֵּהּ מַ	דְּבַר	יְהוָה הַ	לְצֹ	לְצֹ	לְצֹ	לְצֹ
H1961	H1992	But the word	of the LORD	precept	precept	precept	precept
		H1697	H3068	H6673	H6673	H6673	H6673
לִקָּ	לִקָּ	לִקָּ	לִקָּ	זֶע יר	שׁ מַ	זֶע יר	שׁ מַ
line	line	line	line	and there a little	H8033	and there a little	H8033
H6957	H6957	H6957	H6957	H2191		H2191	
וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:	וְנִלְכְּדוּ:
H4616	H1980	and fall	backward	and be broken	and snared	and taken	
		H3782	H268	H7665	H3369	H3920	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:44 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Matthew 13:14 (Parallel theme): And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Isaiah 28:10 (Parallel theme): For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Psalms 69:22 (Parallel theme): Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

2 Peter 3:16 (Word): As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.