

Isaiah 28:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Verses 9-13 present disputed interpretation. Either:

1. drunk leaders mockingly ask who Isaiah thinks he's teaching—toddlers?, or
2. Isaiah/God asks rhetorically who can receive teaching—only those mature enough.

Context favors (1): drunken leaders resent Isaiah's rebuke, sarcastically asking **whom shall he teach knowledge?** (et-mi yoreh de'ah, אַתְּ-מִי יוֹרֵה דְּעָה) and **whom shall he make to understand doctrine?** (ve'et-mi yavin shemu'ah, וְאַתְּ-מִי יָבִין שְׁמֻעָה, whom will he make understand the message?).

Their sneering answer: **them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts** (gmule mechalav atiqei mishaddayim, גָּמָולִי מְחַלָּב עֲתִיקִי מְשָׁדָיִם, those weaned from milk, removed from breasts)—little children just past nursing! They mock Isaiah as treating them like infants needing elementary instruction. The irony: their drunken stupor proves they DO need basic teaching. They think themselves wise but are actually immature (1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Hebrews 5:12-14). Those who should teach others still need milk, not solid food.

Historical Context

Throughout history, corrupt leaders resent prophetic rebuke. Amaziah told Amos to leave (Amos 7:12-13). Pashhur struck Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:1-2). Herodias killed John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3-10). Jesus faced religious leaders who rejected His teaching as offensive (John 6:60, 66). Paul rebuked Corinthians for remaining infants in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1). The church has always struggled with leaders who think themselves advanced but lack basic spiritual maturity. Pride blinds people to their need for instruction.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. When have you resented correction because you thought yourself beyond needing 'elementary' teaching?
2. How does spiritual pride (thinking we're mature) actually prove our immaturity and need for God's word?
3. What marks genuine spiritual maturity versus the false sophistication that rejects basic biblical truth?

Interlinear Text

מִי אָתָּה יְמַנֵּה וְיַדְעֵה

H853 H4310

Whom shall he teach

H3384

מִי אָתָּה יְמַנֵּה וְיַדְעֵה

H853

H4310

H1844

יְבִין

שְׁמֹועַת הַ

גָּמֹלִי

and whom shall he make to understand doctrine them that are weaned

H995

H8052

H1580

מִקְלָב עַתִּיק מִשְׁתַּחַת

from the milk and drawn from the breasts

H2461

H6267

H7699

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 131:2 (Parallel theme): Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Jeremiah 6:10 (Parallel theme): To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

John 12:38 (Parallel theme): That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Isaiah 53:1 (Parallel theme): Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Isaiah 54:13 (Parallel theme): And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Jeremiah 5:31 (Parallel theme): The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

John 3:19 (Parallel theme): And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Isaiah 50:4 (Parallel theme): The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Psalms 50:17 (Parallel theme): Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org