

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



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Mocking God

Those who ridicule the Bible as an outdated source of instruction see themselves as too sophisticated for such children's literature. But in the end, it is they who are the biggest losers.

"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" (Isa. 28:9-10).

The closing lines of this passage are often used to illustrate the gradual revelation of God's word to humanity. God revealed His word in bits and pieces ("here a little, there a little") over a long span of time, until we finally got the completed Bible. The language certainly fits the idea, but study the context and it's apparent that Isaiah is describing something entirely different.

In fact, these words are not those of God or His prophet, but of the drunken priests and prophets whom Isaiah is rebuking (v. 7-8). Their response is to challenge Isaiah's right to criticize them: Does he think we are little children who must be instructed by his simplistic moralizing? The "precept upon precept, line upon line" language is actually a mockery of Isaiah's teaching, mimicking a

teacher trying to communicate with little children. The NIV renders this verse, "Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there." It's the priests and prophets' way of letting Isaiah know that they are much too sophisticated for his brand of teaching.

Isaiah responds to their mockery with a promise of retribution. The day will come, he warns, when a nation of "stammering lips and another tongue" will order God's people around (v. 11). In that day, their mockery will be turned against them by their oppressors, "that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught" (v. 13). They would not listen to God's word when Isaiah spoke to them; therefore, they will receive God's message delivered by a rampaging enemy.

This entire scenario is highly relevant to our modern age. Our society has moved beyond God altogether, convinced that they no longer need religion as a crutch to help navigate through life. Consequently, our efforts at preaching God's truth to this generation are often not just ignored, but ridiculed as back-

ward, outdated, primitive. Like the drunken priests and prophets of Isaiah's day, our fellow citizens are too sophisticated — and too intoxicated by pleasure — to be bothered with the words of the Bible.

People are free to mock God's word today; but a day will come when the consequences of their choice will crash upon them in an unavoidable catastrophe. It may come in the form of a personal tragedy, or a widespread collapse of social order. It may not happen until the final judgment. But whatever form it takes, it *will* come. "God is not mocked," Paul once wrote (Gal. 6:7), and those who choose to play that game will someday find out who it is they are mocking. God is not to be trifled with, and one way or the other, all of us will learn that lesson.

Isaiah's critics mocked his teaching as suited for little children. Ironically, the path of true wisdom requires that we humble ourselves as little children in order to get the most out of life (Matt. 18:4). It is those who cannot do so who stand to lose the most.

— David King