

**God's Story – Our Story**  
**Bringing the Heat – In God We Trust?**  
**July 14, 2024**

**Overarching Theme:** 2024 – A Year in God's Story

**Instructions:**

When using this resource as teacher, feel free to discern the points you want to emphasize in the lesson. See "The Grand Sweep" material for additional information.

Core Point: 2024 can be a year of living into God's Story as we journey from Genesis to Revelation together.

**Reflect on this Scripture:** Isaiah 28:14-18; 21-22 (NRSV)

*<sup>14</sup>Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup>Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter"; <sup>16</sup>therefore thus says the Lord God, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: "One who trusts will not panic." <sup>17</sup>And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter. <sup>18</sup>Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it.*

*<sup>21</sup>For the LORD will rise up as on Mount Perazim, he will rage as in the valley of Gibeon; to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work! <sup>22</sup>Now therefore do not scoff, or your bonds will be made stronger; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord God of hosts upon the whole land.*

**Commentary:** What is this "covenant of death" that Isaiah attributes to those who "rule this people in Jerusalem?" This phrase likely refers to the fact that the Jerusalem government has made covenants in the form of political and military alliances (likely with Egypt in this case against an impending Assyrian threat) instead of trusting in its covenant with the LORD. The Isaiah tradition views all such political alliances as foolhardy attempts on Israel's part to secure its own existence, when in fact its real security can come only from submission to and trust in the LORD. It is clear in covenantal theology that the king in Jerusalem is to be son and servant only

of the LORD and no other power. It is no wonder, then, that the prophetic tradition maintains that the king's choosing other alliances will only lead to death and destruction. The Isaiah tradition consistently critiques all attempts to secure our own existence through political posturing and military expansionism. In the long run, such ventures are destructive and will not work.

The prophetic oracle turns from this harsh indictment to a promise that God will lay a "precious cornerstone" that will be the pivot point for the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem and God's people. The phrase is itself enigmatic and clearly appeals to architectural imagery. It is plausible that the precious cornerstone here anticipated in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. is the rock-bottom faith out of which newness is possible. The early Church, in pondering this text, took over the phrase and understood Jesus of Nazareth to be the cornerstone for God's newness in the world (Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:4-8)

-Adapted from "The Life with God Bible" Isaiah commentary by Walter Brueggemann, pp. 1018,1020.

#### Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Prophet Isaiah refers to political alliances/covenants with foreign powers to be a "covenant with death." How could these covenants undermine their life giving covenant with the LORD?
2. Isaiah challenges the people to trust in God's "foundation stone...a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" – to trust and not panic in the face of adversity/opposition. Why is 'panic' deemed so unhelpful? In what ways is panic the opposite of trust?
3. When are you most tempted to panic and what helps you 'regain your footing', trusting in God's foundation?
4. 1 Peter 2:6 understands Isaiah's 'precious cornerstone' to ultimately find fulfillment in Jesus. What are some ways that Jesus can be a sure foundation for our spiritual lives today?

#### Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Isaiah 28:16 <sup>16</sup>therefore thus says the Lord GOD, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a

*tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: "One who trusts will not panic."*