

Bad Fruit – An Evaluation of Judah’s Evils

Texts: 5:8-23

Date: 6-28-20 Outdoor Service at Brink’s home 10:30 pm

A person cannot read the book of Isaiah without quickly observing both God’s justification for judgment and His desire for the nation to repent.

At the outset of this message, I asked myself this question: “If God was strongly concerned for His people’s wickedness and evil in that day, what would He say about our nation and the church in its present state?”

1. The Woe of Materialism (Isa. 5:8-10).

God’s judgment fits the sin. The wicked gains of the rich would yield cursing and fruitlessness. Their materialism would result in barrenness and poverty. The rich would become poorer than the poor they had stolen from.

2. The Woe of Drunkenness (Isa. 5:11-12).

They cared nothing for the *work of the Lord*. Their constant carousing led to a dwindling of their moral and spiritual values so that they no longer gave thought to God and His words. They cared more for their selfish desires than the things of God.

The worst of all punishment would be the exile that was certain to come upon Judah. But in reality the people were already in captivity to their own sinful lifestyle. They were slaves to their own sins and passions.

All of this was the result of leaving God out of their thinking and their actions. Isa. 1:3; Hos. 4:6; Luke 19:44. When we allow other passions, desires, and things control over our lives, we too will follow in the path of losing our knowledge and hunger for the things of God and His word. Just as the constant carousing and imbibing impaired Judah’s moral and spiritual faculties, we too will give but a fleeting thought to the things of God when we become consumed by selfishness and sin. Judah was turning a blind eye to their impending doom, even though Isaiah and others prophesied of the coming judgment of God. So, to, are we completely ignoring what God can and will do to the nation and peoples that oppose Him through their lustful actions and pompous display of glory in front of His face.

God would be exalted. On the basis of His character and the fact that He keeps His word in His covenant, He would justly judge the nation. God would be sanctified, for He will be unquestionably recognized as holy and the Holy One because the very foundation of His character is righteousness and holiness. His throne is Holy. His character is Holy. God is holy. Ex. 15:11; Psalm 89:14; 97:2; Isa. 57:15; Rev. 15:4

3. The Woe of Provoking God (Isa. 5:18-19).

They were so engrossed in their wrong-doing that they simply longed to do it more; thus, sticking their finger in God’s eyes. The vivid picture is of a man pulling a cart and in the cart is their own wickedness (Prov. 5:22).

The men push God to bring His judgment, mocking Him along the way (Psa. 53:1). The challenge reeked of “I will do what I want to do; let’s see if you, God, the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 1:4), will do what you say you are going to do.” See Jer. 5:12; 17:15. These men either didn’t believe the judgment threat or they thought God doesn’t really care about them. They were asking God for a sign all the while mimicking Isaiah’s language. “If God is going to judge us, then bring it on”, they mocked.

“Iniquity is a severe taskmaster. No taskmaster in Egypt ever ill-treated the Israelites more severely than did their own iniquity. These cords of vanity could be broken only by the Lord. Man can weave cords, but he cannot unweave them” (Young 217).

Deliverance, whether for a person or a nation, will only come through true heart-felt repentance. Spiritual change always precedes the saving of people from His judgment.

4. The Woe of Moral Opposites (Isa. 5:20).

How do people do this? How do they call evil good and good evil? Through their actions, they live out what is wrong and ignore the right. They use God’s vocabulary but not His dictionary (Wiersbe). They give lip service to the right, but their actions are far from it. Psalm 12:2.

People love the bad and hate the good. Then they hate the people who try to tell them otherwise. But what wicked men need is the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit who makes old things pass away and all things to become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

5. The Woe of Foolish Pride (Isa. 5:21).

The human mind naturally is devoid of godly wisdom. To avoid godly wisdom is to invite godly judgment. The spiral of mocking God, switching right and wrong, and relying on human wisdom will always lead to judgment or consequences from God. When man assumes a position of human wisdom as their guide, disaster is soon to follow. For the nation of God’s people to assume that meant certain righteous judgment on it. **Ultimately, the man or nation who ignores God will truly be ignored by God.** See Isa. 29:14; I Cor. 1:27; Prov. 9:10. The cure is Prov. 3:7.

6. The Woe of Injustice (Isa 5:22-23).

The only way that a wicked person can be right before the Law is for the claims of the law to have been satisfied. Jesus Christ did that on the grounds of His perfect righteousness. Those who have broken the law, and that is all of us, stand guilty before God. The only way to receive God’s righteousness – to have it imputed to you – is to confess your sin and repent of it and turn from it. The judges could not do that, no matter how drunk or sober they were. These drunken judges were not truthful or factual.

How does Isaiah 5:8-23 apply to me?

1. God always punishes sin.
2. Sin will never be hidden from God.
3. We must carefully guard against renaming evil good and good evil.
4. It is truly a serious place to ignore God and force Him to abandon those who habitually sin against Him and His character.
5. When we allow other passions, desires, and things control over our lives, we too will follow in the path of losing our knowledge and hunger for the things of God and His word.

What does this passage reveal about the character and nature of God?

1. God judges sin and His judgement is just.
2. God would be sanctified, for He will be unquestionably recognized as holy and the Holy One because the very foundation of His character is righteousness and holiness. His throne is Holy. His character is Holy. God is holy.
3. The righteous will be remembered and the wicked punished.
4. In the end Jehovah will be elevated to His proper place as exalted Judge over the nations.

Action Points

1. Are there any of these six woes that you are guilty of and need to confess as sin before a holy, just God?
2. We must do more than grasp a sense of God's holiness. We need to live in light and according to God's holiness.
3. As our nation grows increasingly cold to God, we have been given a powerful opportunity to shine as lights in a crooked and perverse land. That is not easy, as I am sure it wasn't for Isaiah. Isaiah did not retreat from His God-ordained mission to preach truth and righteousness while many did not care or listen. That is our example today.
4. We are all sinful people in need of God's righteousness. The bridge between man and God was spanned at the cross. Have you come to the place in your life that you believe and are willing to repent of your sins so that Christ can forgive your sins?