

God's Response to Uncontrolled Wickedness

Text: Isaiah 9:18-10:4

Date: 11-8-20 @ 10:30 am

The nation is deserving of the judgment of God.

I. Stanza Three - The wickedness of the nation invites God's wrath (Isa. 9:18-21).

Sin "is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15), in the inward state and habit of the soul, as well as in the outward conduct of the life, whether by omission or commission (Rom. 6:12-17; 7:5-24).

It is "not a mere violation of the law of our constitution, nor of the system of things, but an offence against a personal lawgiver and moral governor who vindicates his law with penalties. The soul that sins is always conscious that his sin is (1) intrinsically vile and polluting, and (2) that it justly deserves punishment, and calls down the righteous wrath of God.", Hodge's Outlines.

The moral character of a man's actions is determined by the moral state of his heart. The disposition to sin, or the habit of the soul that leads to the sinful act, is itself also sin (Gal. 5:17; James 1:14, 15).¹

I want to make it clear that I believe that God holds the standard of right and wrong, and He has set that standard according to Himself. He alone is the One we measure ourselves against, although doing that quickly shows our sinfulness and pride.

The example is clear that the people's wickedness spread rapidly like a fire. It began in the underbrush and then moved to the forest. In the end the smoke arose everywhere like columns of air towards the heavens.

God's restraining grace would be removed and the people would be untamed in their wicked acts. They would be consumed by their passions and thirst for greed, materialism, and immorality. The wickedness would gush out like a flame that has been kindled. The fire would consume the briars and thorns and all the while destroy the nation.

God does not treat sin like we do. We dabble and play with sin. We sin like it is just another common habit in our lives. The nation was sinning as if God didn't exist. They pretended that God didn't care, and they pretended that He wasn't even aware.

One of the ways we know we are growing in the sanctification process is how we treat sin.

Each person chose to take from their neighbors on the right and left, yet the insatiable desire left them wanting more. The wickedness led to brother against brother and the two tribes, who should have been closest, Ephraim and Manasseh, devoured each other. They preferred bitterness, hostility, and hatred toward each other. But, they were left unsatisfied. Oh the deceptive nature of sin. Oh the false passions of sin. It all ends in destruction, both by themselves and by God. God's judgment is painful no doubt, but also justified.

¹Easton, M. (1996, c1897). *Easton's Bible dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

II. Stanza Four – God’s Punishment on the Corrupt Lawmakers (Isa. 10:1-4).

What did these decrees do?

They turned away those who needed the lawmaker’s help the most, the poor and needy, and deprived them of justice. Those who were preying on these people were freed and those who were preyed upon were left poor and robbed. The afflicted people should have had the right to justice, yet none was to be found. In the end those wicked lawmakers enhanced their own standing.

Specifically, they ravaged the widows. They stole what little money and property they had and ransacked their lives leaving them with little or nothing. These laws made victims and misery of the poor. They robbed the widows of their dignity and what little they owned.

We should be concerned like God for these needy people. It is a wicked state to defraud anyone of their life and belongings; even more those who are poor and needy!

- 1) **What will you do on the day of visitation and the ruin to come?** What will be your response to the onrushing storm of God’s wrath?
- 2) **To whom will you flee for help?** Where will you run to find safety? To God? To the only One who can help you? The only One who can help you and who controls the reins of judgment is God. But, the answer is that they wouldn’t flee to Him for they had rejected His calls for repentance. Time had run out.
- 3) **Where will you leave your wealth?** The word *glory* here refers to *cherished possessions* and refers to their pride over their collection of wealth. See Isa. 9:10. When the raging tempest of wrath comes upon Israel, who will be able to hold onto the things that you treasured?

From God’s chastising wrath there will be no escape.

The end is here. The final destruction is clear and precise. God’s wrath will pour out like water over the rocks. Exile or death will be the only options. God’s wrath will be complete.

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

1. We are again confronted that God is just and holy.
2. God doesn’t ignore sin

What are some “call to action” truths from Isaiah 9:8-10:4?

1. Know that God does not treat sin like we do. We dabble and play with sin. We sin like it is just another common habit in our lives. God is not impressed, and frankly we shouldn’t be either.
2. Don’t be like Israel and Judah. Turn from your sin and repent. Don’t invite God’s wrath by continuing in sinful habits and patterns.