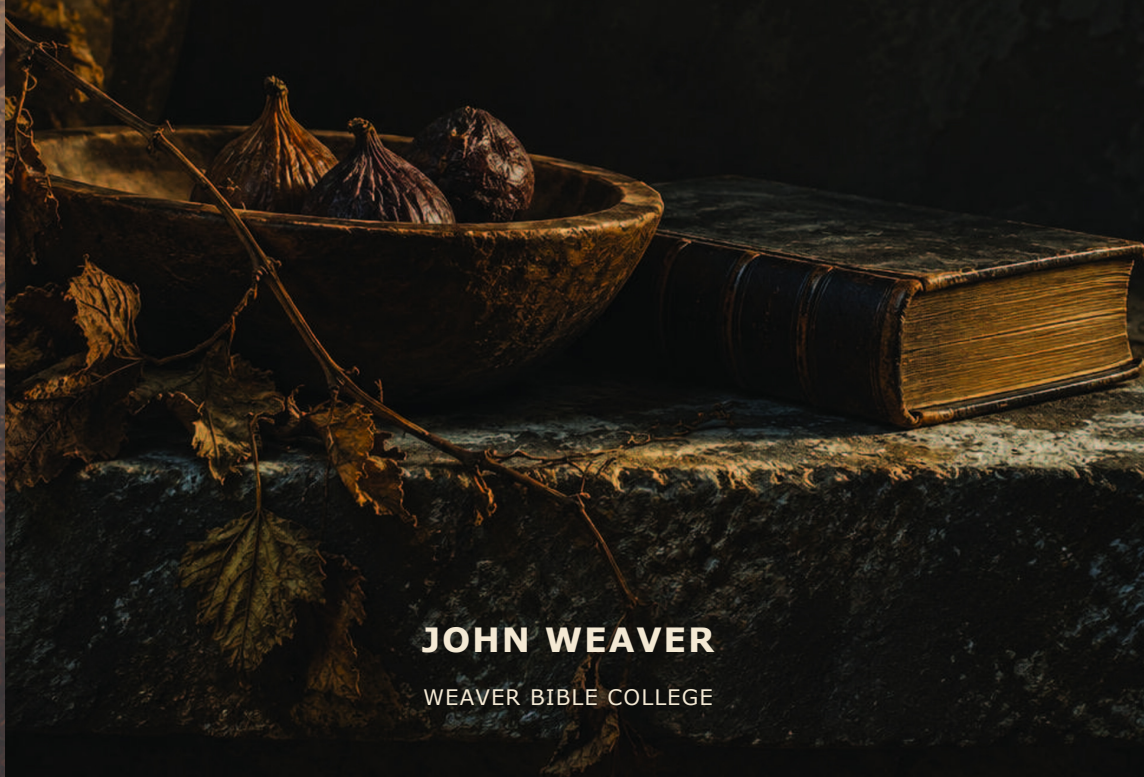
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Fruit of Sin

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

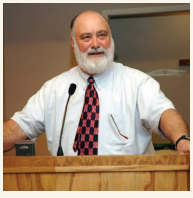
Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

GALATIANS 6:7, EXCERPT

Sin bears consequences beyond its first attraction. John Weaver considers the fruit of disobedience, the deception of appearances, and the responsibility to acknowledge what our choices produce. These messages direct the reader toward repentance and the biblical distinction between passing pleasure and lasting good.

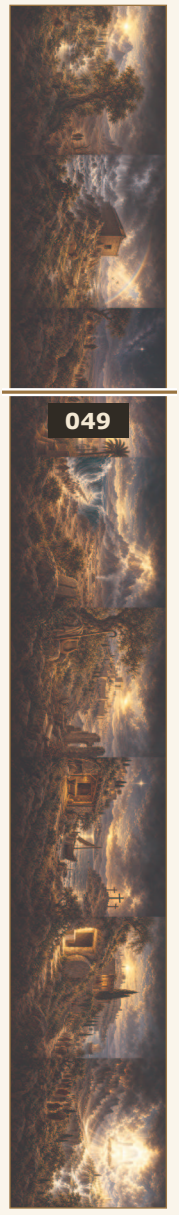
“The problem with sowing our wild oats and doing that which is wicked and ungodly is that we always reap exactly what we sow.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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CHAPTER 1

The Fruit of Sin

Part One

The Fruit of Sin: Rebellious Children

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 1:1-9 (KJV)

Introduction: The Fruit of Sin

Open your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 1. We are going to read the first nine verses. Let me make a statement before we read the Scripture. I am going to start a message today, and it will take me two more weeks to finish. I hope that by the time I get through two weeks from today, you will at least have a clear understanding of where we are in this country and how we got to where we are. Today will be basically an introduction, but I believe the next two messages will certainly spell everything out for you.

Isaiah chapter 1, verse 1: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

> "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. For the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."
>
> A sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord. They have provoked the Holy One of Israel into anger. They are going away backwards. Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devoured in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers.
>
> The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city, except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant. We should have been as Sodom, and we should have been made like unto Gomorrah.
>
> The title of the message this Sunday and the next two Sundays is "The Fruit of Sin: Rebellious Children." Sin produces fruit, and it is not a very pleasant fruit. Someone has aptly said that sin will take you further than you want to go. It will keep you longer than you want to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to pay. That is certainly a very true statement.

The problem that we have is that everyone wants to sow their wild oats, they want to sow their wild seed, and then they want to leave before the harvest comes in. But that certainly is not possible because the Bible says in Galatians 6:7-8, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." God has decreed in Proverbs 1:31, "Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices." So actually there is no escaping that which we sow, we're going to reap it. The fruit of

sin is death. The Bible says in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death."

One of the greatest books outside of the Bible that has ever been written is Pilgrim's Progress, written by John Bunyan. Bunyan writes, "Now I saw upon a time when he was walking in the fields, that he, that his pilgrim, was as he was wont reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind. And as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, 'What must I do to be saved?' I saw also that he looked this way and that way, as if he would run. Yet he stood still, because as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and he asked, 'Wherefore dost thou cry?' He, Pilgrim, answered, 'Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment.' I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor am I able to do the second."

Sin does bring death. We sow it. We reap it. We bring destruction upon ourselves. In James chapter 1 and verse 13, the Bible says: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

The word tempt is used in several different ways. When the Bible says, "Now it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham," the word tempt means to test or to try. It does not mean to try to entice someone to evil or to do something wrong. Thus, when James says, "For God cannot be tempted with evil," he means that God is untemptable because He is absolutely, perfectly holy. "Neither tempteth he any man." In other words, God does not try to entice us into sin.

Where, then, does our sin come from? "But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

What James has written, and what Paul has written when he says that the wages of sin is death, is true of individuals. It is also true of families. Each of us has seen families destroyed by sin. What is true of individuals and families is also true of churches. I have seen a multitude of churches destroyed because of sin. What is true of

individuals, families, and churches is equally true of states. What is true of individuals, families, churches, and states is also true of nations.

In fact, God said to the nation Israel, in Hosea 13:9, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Judgment fell upon the entire nation because of its sin and rebellion against God. Families, churches, states, and nations are made up of individuals. God not only judges individuals; He also judges collective bodies of persons.

Isaiah 1:6 says, "From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." That speaks of an individual, yet it is applied to the entire nation.

The Witnesses Summoned

Isaiah 1:1 says, “The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and the kings of Judah.” The Bible is teaching us very clearly here that we are talking about a nation. If we look at verse 4, it says, “a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.” Isaiah gives an illustration of a sick man, a dying man, but yet he is talking about a nation. When we look at verse 2, we begin to see the wickedness and wretchedness of rebellious children in detail.

He says, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.”

Now, we are going to see three simple points, and hopefully cover one little subpoint. Notice, first of all, the witnesses summoned. We will not get out of verse 2, but here are the witnesses summoned. God says here, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth.” Is it strange that God summons the heavens and the earth to be witnesses against his people? It appears that all of his people were in rebellion against him and that absolutely none would stand with him. Therefore, he calls the heaven and the earth to be his witnesses.

This is clear not only in Isaiah, but it is also clear in the other prophets in the Old Testament. In Jeremiah, chapter 5, verses 1 and

2, we see how thoroughly, absolutely corrupt the people were, and their rebellion and wickedness. Here it is again in Jeremiah 5:1.

Look what God tells Jeremiah: “Run you to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see now, and know and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, if there be any that execute a judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely.” God told Jeremiah to run throughout the streets of Jerusalem. If he could find one man who sought the truth and executed judgment, God would pardon the entire nation. If he could find just one man. Yet God went on to say, “Though they say, The Lord liveth”—in other words, they knew the lingo and the language—“surely,” He said, “they swear falsely.” The nation as a whole had forsaken God. None would be a witness for God; none would stand with God. Therefore, God calls heaven and earth to witness against His people. Throughout Scripture, God has indeed called heaven and earth to witness.

For instance, holding Isaiah 1, let us go back in our Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 30 and look at verse 19. It is interesting that God gave these witnesses, stated them in the very beginning. Notice what God says to His people in Deuteronomy 30:19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

What is God saying? “I’m calling My witnesses to record this before Me. I have set before you the way of life and the way of death, the way of blessing and the way of cursing. I am urging you, beseeching you, to choose life and to choose blessing.” Heaven and earth will witness against you; they have recorded that I offered you life and death, blessing and cursing.

It should not be strange, then, when you come to Isaiah 1:2 and God says, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,” because they recorded His instruction and warning way back in the beginning. What is God doing when He calls heaven and earth to witness against His people? First and foremost, God calls heaven and earth to witness in expressing abhorrence to a nation’s sins and rebellion.

You and I look at the heavens. We see the moon, the sun, and the stars, and we think nothing of it. We look at the earth; we see the trees, the flowers, the birds, and everything there, and we think nothing of it. Yet God uses the heavens, and God uses the earth, to witness against His people because of their sins and their wickedness.

In Jeremiah 2:11, He asks this question: “Have the nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be astonished, you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. Be ye desolate, saith the Lord, for my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Then He says, “Be astonished, oh you heavens, and be horribly afraid. And be ye desolate, saith the Lord.” Why? Because of the rebellion and the sin of His people. He said, “They forsaken me, the fountain of living water. And they hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

So God is calling the heavens to witness. Psalm 89:11 says, “The heavens are thine. The earth also is thine. As far as the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them.” Let me tell you something: the heavens and the earth which God has created will always stand for Him. He calls heaven and earth, first, to witness the atrocious and wicked sins against His people. Secondly, He calls heaven and earth as witnesses for the prosecution. Even the heavens and the earth have been sinned against by the wickedness and rebellion of His people.

This is why Psalm 50 begins with the declaration, “Our God shall come and shall not keep silence.” God is calling heaven and earth as a witness for the prosecution. The heavens and the earth, which He created, stand as witnesses against the rebellion and wickedness of His people. They have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

"A fire shall devour before him and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Notice:

"he shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth that he may judge his people." What is he doing? He is summoning heaven and earth to be witnesses against his people.

Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 4, beginning with verse 25. Again, he is calling heaven and earth to witness against his people. God says, "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall remain long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger, watch, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land. Where until you go over Jordan to possess it, you shall not prolong your days upon it, but you shall be utterly destroyed."

So God not only uses heaven and earth to witness against the sins of his people; he uses heaven and earth as a witness for the prosecution as well. Because heaven and earth were created by God, they will stand with him.

Third, here is an interesting thought: the heavens and earth rejoice when the sovereign God of heaven and earth exercises his government, either in salvation or condemnation. Heaven and earth are not only God's witnesses against the sins of his people and witnesses for the prosecution; heaven and earth rejoice when God exercises governmental authority, whether it is for salvation or damnation.

Listen to 1 Chronicles 16:31: "Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice. Let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth." Why? Simply because the heavens and the earth know that God reigns. Listen also to Psalm 69:34-35: "Let the heavens and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moveth therein. For God will save Zion and will build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there and have it in possession."

Here is God's salvation. God says, “Let the heaven and earth praise him.” But listen to Jeremiah 4:28: “For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black, because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.” There is God's judgment, and He is once again using the heavens

and the earth. The heavens and the earth are always going to be on the side of the Creator.

We are told in Deuteronomy 10:14, “Behold, the heaven and the heavens of heavens is the Lord thy God's, the earth also, and all that is therein.” And in Isaiah 48:13, God said, “My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. When I call unto them, they stand together.”

Whenever God calls heaven and earth, He calls them either as a witness against our sins—a witness for the prosecution—or to rejoice when He exercises His governmental authority, whether for our salvation or for our destruction. The very fact that God calls heaven and earth as witnesses underlines the dignity of God.

Go back in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 1. I want to show you the second point. Watch carefully. Isaiah 1:2: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth.” There are the witnesses summoned.

The Warning Spoken

Notice, secondly, the warning spoken: “For the Lord hath spoken.” Isn't that interesting? “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken.” Nothing else really needs to be said, for when God speaks, the entire earth should keep silence. You know what Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 22:29? “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.” Three times: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.” When God speaks, everyone and everything should listen.

In Habakkuk 2:20, the Bible says, “But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” If the realization that God sovereignly and supremely reigns from on high, and that God is in His holy temple, alone requires the earth to keep silence before God, how much more are we required to keep silent when God speaks? And how much more are we required to keep silent when God speaks in anger and in wrath? I can assure you, as a child, you've done things wrong and wicked.

When your parent confronted you, very upset and very angry, all you could do was drop your head and keep your mouth closed. This

is exactly what the Bible is telling us when God speaks. We should be silent, especially if He is speaking in anger.

Micah 1:2 says, “Hear all ye people, hearken, O earth, and all that is therein is, and let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.” Hear all you people; hearken, O earth; hear all that is therein. Here is what He is saying: Shut up and listen. Shut up and listen. Listen to God’s controversy. Listen to God’s complaint. Let the Lord God be witness against you.

Micah 6:1–2 says, “Hear you now what the Lord said, arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear Thy voice. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord’s controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth, for the Lord hath a controversy with His people, and He will plead with Israel.” Notice that He is calling again for even the earth to remain silent and listen to God’s charge, God’s complaint, God’s controversy against His people. The mountains and the strong foundations of the earth are called to hear the Lord’s controversy.

When you look back at Isaiah 1:2, it says, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken.” We know that the Lord had spoken by Moses. We know that the Lord had spoken by the prophets. We now know that God is speaking by the prophet Isaiah. What Isaiah is about to deliver are not the words of Isaiah, but the words of God Himself. Isaiah is speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Are you listening? If you understand that Isaiah is speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then the words he speaks are God’s words, not his. They are not merely Isaiah’s words; they are God’s words.

As God's people, we need a fresh understanding of the doctrine of inspiration. Most of us say that we believe the Bible is inspired and is the Word of God, but we never really think of the implications of that truth.

Inspiration is the strong, conscious in-breathing of God into man, thus qualifying him to give utterance to the truth, so that the words which they wrote and spoke were and are indeed the very words of God Himself. Let me say that one more time. Inspiration is a strong, conscious in-breathing of God into men, thus qualifying them to give

utterance to the truth, so that the words they spoke and wrote were and are indeed the very words of God. Here is what inspiration literally means. Inspiration means that the Bible is just as much the Word of God as if God spoke every single word out of His own mouth. When you get to 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” the word inspiration means God breathed, or God exhaled. That is what the word means in this passage: God breathed, God exhaled. Inspiration means that God exhaled or breathed the very words of God.

I will be honest: I literally detest those Bibles that have the words of Jesus in red. Every word in the Bible is the word of Jesus Christ. I know what they are trying to do: Jesus spoke these words, and so they are highlighted in red. The truth is, He spoke everything from Genesis 1:1 all the way to Revelation 22. He spoke every word. Every word is God's Word.

You remember, I have told you in times past, some people try to say, “I believe in Jesus Christ, but I don't believe the Bible,” or, “I believe the Bible, but I don't believe in Jesus Christ.” That is impossible, because Jesus Christ is the living Word of God, and the Bible is the written Word of God. You cannot maintain one attitude toward Christ and a different attitude toward the Bible. You cannot have one attitude toward the Bible and a different attitude toward Jesus Christ.

I want you to see what our Lord says. Hold Isaiah 1, but turn in your Bibles to the book of John, chapter 12, and look at verse 48. You remember, the Bible says this in John 1: “In the beginning was the word, the word with God, the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

"Without him was nothing made that was made." When you get to verse 14, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus Christ is the living Word; the Bible is the written Word. Look how he does this in John 12:48. Our Lord says, "He that rejected me, and receive it, not my words, have one that judges him, the word that I've spoken, the same shall judge him the last day."

Notice, if you would, "he that rejected me," that's Christ, the living Word, "and received not my words," that's the written Word, "have one that judges him. The word that I've spoken," which is the written Word, "the same shall judge him in the last day."

So when you try to say, "I believe the Bible, I don't believe in Christ," that's impossible. Or, "I believe in Christ, but I don't believe the Bible," that's impossible. Our Lord said that he and his Word are one. If you turn your back upon either one, you will be judged by his Word.

You know what the Apostle Paul said to the Thessalonians? "But when you receive the word which you heard of us, you receive it not as the Word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you who believe." Paul said, when we preach, you didn't say, "That's what Paul thinks." No. They said, "That is the Word of God."

The Word of God is not good advice that one may receive or reject at his leisure. It is nothing less than the Word of the sovereign God of heaven and earth, who issues for his commands, his instructions, his demands, his warnings, and his promises, which one rejects at his own peril.

"The Lord hath spoken." Do you realize that God's Word is the full, final, authoritative answer to every question? How often do we think, "Well, I know the Bible says this, but I want to do this"? The truth is that when it comes to the Word of God, no one can change it, hinder it, thwart it, or stop it. It is still the Word of God. And God said in Isaiah 46:10, "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure." And it's going to stand. It was.

Voltaire, the French atheist and infidel, said that within a hundred years after his death, Christianity would be gone and the Bible extinct. Yet within a few years after his death, the American Bible Society purchased his house, set up printing presses, and printed and sent out thousands of Bibles. The Word of God is here to stay.

Now go back to Isaiah chapter 1, verse 2, because we are going to begin what I want to bring to you. Notice the witnesses summoned: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth.” The warning spoken is,

“The Lord has spoken.” Then the wickedness is stated: “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.”

The wickedness that abounded in God’s people is presented in a way that we can easily, quickly, and readily comprehend and identify with: the picture of rebellious children. If you have ever had a rebellious child, you know the heartache firsthand. If you have never had one, undoubtedly you know a family member or friend who has, and you are still familiar with that heartache. And if you have never, in your entire life, had a rebellious child, you should immediately thank God and give Him the honor, praise, and glory.

The Wickedness Stated: Rebellious Children

It was not your instruction or wise leadership that caused your child to turn out right. It is true that you may have instructed your child and led your child, but what made your child turn out right was the blessing of God upon that instruction and leadership. For the Scripture says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it, and except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." If God had not blessed your instruction and leadership, your child would have turned out just as wicked and ungodly as others.

I have known godly parents who gave their children a Christian education, raised them in church under the preaching of the gospel, and whose children still turned out rebellious and wicked. It is not education that saves; it is Jesus Christ. God does choose to save through the foolishness of preaching, but it is still Christ who must save.

Pastor Isaac Case began his ministry in Reedville, Maine, and remained there until his death at the age of ninety-one on November 3, 1852. He gave his life to preaching the gospel. The War for Independence was over, the message of Christ was being expanded, and Pastor Case was used to plant many churches in that area. He established the First Baptist Church of Thomaston and the First Baptist Church of Reed Field. He baptized innumerable people. In those days, an individual was not counted as a convert unless he was

baptized and added to the church, and Pastor Case had a multitude of them.

In 1904, Dr. A. R. Crane presented a paper to the Maine Baptist Missionary Convention entitled "The Baptist Ministers in Maine from 1804 to 1904." He listed Pastor Isaac Case as one of the most important pastors. Dr. Crane said he had heard Pastor Case preach in his old age and considered him to have as much power with God as any man he had ever heard. Here was a man who had given his life to the ministry and to preaching the gospel, a man who evidently had the power of God upon him. Yet Dr. Crane himself, a believer and a preacher, could not understand how Pastor Case could have a grown son who would not even attend church. Finally, Dr. Crane asked the son why he never attended church. The son's answer was this: "Grace is not hereditary. Depravity is."

Grace is not hereditary. Depravity is. Depravity is indeed hereditary. And if God's grace is not shed abroad in one's heart, depravity will shine through at every stage. I find it interesting that Dr. Case's grown son at least knew that his rebellion and his unbelief were due to his own depravity.

Isaiah says, “I've nourished and brought up children, and they rebelled against me.” This verse indicates that God had indeed loved, provided for, and nourished His people. The Hebrew word nourished means to nourish in body, mind, and estate. It means to increase, promote, and make excellent. God nourished them, promoted them, and wanted to make them excellent. The word brought up means to raise up, bring up, exalt, and give elevation, dignity, honor, and eminence. That is what He said: “I brought up children, and they rebelled against me.”

God told Moses to say to Pharaoh, “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn. And I say to thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me. And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.” Israel was His son. In Deuteronomy, God asked, “Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and wise? Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath He not made thee and established thee?” What is God saying? You are what you are because of Me. You are My son; you are My child.

Unlike other nations, Israel's origin was due to the divine, miraculous, supernatural grace and work of God. It was God who came to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees; Abram was not seeking God. God came to Abram and brought him out. It was God who gave him the inheritance of the land, provided for him, and protected him. It was God who sent those people down into Egypt. He multiplied them and preserved them. When He brought them out into the desert, He provided for them. When He sent them into Canaan land, He gave them victory and allowed them to have everything that the enemies had prepared. Everything they had was due to God.

The amazing thing is this: even though they were what they were by the grace of God and had whatever they had only by the grace of God—because God had chosen them, called them, provided for them, and protected them—yet they rebelled against Him. The word rebelled literally means to break away, to break loose. It has the idea of dissolving a relationship with a person through violence and self-will.

Israel’s sin was not just the sin of rebellion, but also the sin of idolatry, ingratitude, thanklessness, and defiance.

In Isaiah chapter 1, God gives us a picture that we can very easily, clearly, quickly, and readily comprehend: rebellious children. He says, “For I've nourished and brought up children and they rebelled against me.” It is the same with our children. We begat them, raised them, provided for them, taught them, educated them, gave to them, and sacrificed for them. I know from experience that there are many times when parents did without just so their children could have, and the children never even realized it.

You sacrifice for them and give them your heart and your love. Then what do they do? They spit in your face. They rebel, demand their own way, demand to do their own thing, and will not listen. They love their own way and are filled with self-greediness and covetousness. They have no concern for their parents, their siblings, or anyone else. All they want is what they want. They refuse to consider, repent, return, or do what was right. They refuse to come back to the way they were raised and taught.

All they do is create confusion, consternation, anarchy, and division. What do rebellious children become? A heartache to their parents.

One of the most heartrending experiences is having a rebellious child. You want to help him and save him, but he will not allow you to help him or allow himself to be saved. He does not want salvation or help; he wants his own way. What God is saying is this: What your children do to you, you have done to Me.

In Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son gives us the epitome of a rebellious child.

The Prodigal Son as an Illustration

"And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me a portion of goods that falleth me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." And he went and joined himself to the citizens of that country, and he sent him into the fields to feed swine, and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.

Now, go back to verse 12 and notice the demanding, demeaning attitude of this young boy: "And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth me. And he divided unto them his living." He was a grown son, certainly old enough to leave home. He was old enough to sin, to be wicked and ungodly, and he was demanding that his father give to him.

Have you ever had a child demand something? If you do not give it, they get angry and mad because they cannot have their way. It is beyond my thinking today, thankfully, that people could do this, and yet people do it all the time. I have told my children and grandchildren over and over, "I will help you. As long as I can, I'd break my neck to help you."

But if you think for one minute that I am going to subsidize your sin, rebellion, and wickedness, you are mistaken. There is a principle

in Scripture: he who sins must suffer. If you think I will take whatever little bit God has given me and give it to a rebellious child, you have another thought coming. I am not going to do that.

My responsibility is to my wife. My children are grown, and my grandchildren are grown. If they are going to sin, they are going to sin by themselves, and they are going to sin with me. The point I am trying to make is this: what our children do to us, we do to God. Now turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 5.

Was it not absolutely wicked, wrong, and rebellious for this young man to demand that his father give him his inheritance? That which his father had worked for and saved, he took and threw all away, until he had nothing. He wanted to eat with swine, with husks.

Let us consider what this boy did. He took all the blessings of his father and abused and misused every one of them. He was totally ungrateful, unthankful, and wicked.

Misusing God's Blessings

Does God give us air to breathe? He does. Does God give us food to eat? Yes, He does. Did God give us money to spend? Some have far more than others, but everything that we have is from God. People do exactly the same thing to our Heavenly Father that children do to us. In Jeremiah 5, God says to Judah and Jerusalem:

"How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and have sworn by them that are no gods. They have gone into idolatry. When I had fed them to the full, that is, I gave them food, then they committed adultery and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses. They were as fed horses in the morning, every one made after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord?"

"And shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

What is He saying? You took everything that I gave you in love, and you turned around and perverted it and misused it to sin and rebel against Me. God gave us health, strength, and life. Why did God do that? In order that we might honor Him, worship Him, praise Him, and serve Him.

But what do we do? We take everything that He has given us and pervert it, turning it into an avenue and a sphere of sin and wickedness. “I've nourished and brought up children,” said God, “but they rebelled against me.”

Now let me ask you: As a parent, be honest—you do not have to answer aloud—would you be more willing to give to and help a loving, obedient, respectful child? Or would you be more willing to give to and help one who is despiteful, wicked, and fights against you at every turn of life? Which would you be more willing to help? I think I know the answer. It is easier to help a child who wants to do what is right, who is loving, kind, and respectful. It is very difficult to help one who is the opposite.

Turn to Psalm 81. As you turn there, I want to remind you of what God said: “I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me.”

God's Longing to Bless the Obedient

Now, I ask you those questions for a reason. Would you rather help an obedient, loving, respectful child, or one who was hateful, wicked, and rebellious? You know that, as a parent, you are going to help the obedient, respectful, and loving child. Here is the problem: you want to help the other child, but he will not let you help him because he is not going to do what is right.

Look at what God said to His people in Psalm 81, beginning with verse 10: “I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.” What a blessing. God said, “All you have to do is open your mouth wide,” like a mother bird poking that worm down her baby bird’s beak. God says, “Open thy mouth wide. I’ll pour the blessings in.”

“But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would have none of me.” So, says God, “I gave them up to their own heart’s lust, and they walked in their own counsel.”

Now listen to what this loving parent said: “Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my way. I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned my hand against their adversaries, The haters of the Lord should have submitted

themselves unto Him, but their time should have endured forever. He should have fed them also with the finest of wheat and with honey out of the rock, should I have satisfied thee."

Notice what God said: I wanted to do this, but you would not listen. You rebelled. If you had just listened to Me and obeyed, I would have subdued your enemies. The haters of the Lord would have submitted themselves to Me, and I would have fed you with honey and with the finest of wheat. But you would not listen. How our Heavenly Father longed to do for Israel, and He longed to do more than He did.

Application: Submission and Obedience

"Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." He wanted to sustain, nourish, and defend her. But because of her sins and rebellion, He gave her over to chastisement, servitude, and punishment.

Here is a good lesson for our children: if they really want their parents to help them, they need to learn submission, obedience, honor, and respect. Here is a lesson for every Christian. If we really want our Heavenly Father to help us, defend us, and provide for us, then we need to learn submission, obedience, honor, and respect. Our Heavenly Father will always help those who are submissive and obedient to Him, and He will always chastise and discipline those who are otherwise. What did God say?

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. The Lord has spoken. I have nourished and brought up children and they rebelled against me." What God said of an individual, He applies to the nation.

Father, I pray that You would help us today. Give us understanding, grace, and mercy. Help us, Lord, not to be rebellious as physical children, but not to be rebellious as spiritual children. May we realize Thy Word is truth. May we submit and bow to Thee, honor Thee, and respect Thee, for Thou art our God and our Father. Give us grace, Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Speak to those of our children that are lost, those who are still in rebellion. Lord, deal in their hearts. We commit them unto You and ask for Your mercy and grace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Fruit of Sin

Part Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 1:1-9 (KJV)

Review of Part 1: The Heartache of Rebellious Children

Isaiah chapter 1, and we're going to read the first nine verses. This is the second part of the message that I began last week, "The Fruit of Sin: Rebellious Children." Lord willing, there will be a third part next week. So look in Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 1: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord. They provoke the Holy One of Israel into anger. They are going away

> backward. Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate. Your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devour in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city, except the Lord of hosts hath left unto us a very small remnant."

"We should have been as Sodom, and we should have been made like unto Gomorrah." Last week we began looking at Isaiah chapter 1, verses 1 through 9, in detail. We discovered that sin is exceedingly wicked and always leads to heartache and destruction. Our Lord always cries out against sin, especially sin in His people. He demonstrates here the grief and heartache that always attends sin. He does so in a way we may easily comprehend, giving the example of rebellious children. He shows how the grief and heartache we experience from our rebellious children is amplified when He experiences the heartache and grief with His rebellious children. Last week we looked at two points, actually three, and just got started on the third. We noticed in verse 2, first, the witnesses summoned: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," where God calls heaven and earth to witness against His people. Then we saw secondly, the warning spoken. He says the Lord has spoken. Everyone must attend unto the words of the Lord, especially when He speaks in anger.

Thirdly, we look at the wickedness stated. He said, "I've nourished and brought up children and they rebelled against me." So we look mainly at verse 2. The Lord is giving us an illustration that we can very quickly lay hold of. I pointed out last week that if any of us had rebellious children, we know the heartache and grief involved. If you have been so blessed by God not to have any rebellious children, then you certainly know family members or friends that do, and you're associated with that heartache as well. So God says in verse 2, "I've nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me." When you look at that verse, you cannot help but think

it's one thing to rebel against a sinful, yet loving and godly parent who tries to do what is right but fails. Yet it's quite another thing to rebel against a holy, sovereign, loving and just God who is absolutely perfect and absolutely righteous. Another thing we fail to realize is this: when a child rebels against his father and his mother, he's actually rebelling against God. Because God is the ultimate, absolute, and sovereign authority, and there is no authority but of God, and therefore God has delegated authority to the father and to the mother over the child. So when they are resisting and rebelling against that parental authority, then at the same time they are resisting and rebelling against God Himself. So many then not only rebel against parental authority, they try to thumb their noses at God as well.

For instance, their attitude is much like the attitude of the Pharaoh in Exodus 5 and verse 2 when he said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord." Pharaoh basically thumbed his nose at God and said, "I don't recognize You. I don't recognize Your authority. I'm not going to listen to You." Parents, even godly parents, who desire to do that which is right, oftentimes fail. But the truth is, God never fails. And there is no rhyme or reason to rebel against God. Job asked this question in Job 9, verse 24. "Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?" That's a stomping thing. Who has ever hardened himself against God and prospered? Who has ever hardened himself against God and succeeded in his rebellion against God? And the answer is absolutely no one. As you read Isaiah chapter 1, you can come to this realization: it is extremely difficult, it is extremely heart-rending and grievous to watch a child destroy himself. When the child absolutely will not listen, will not heed any instruction, the only thing that a godly parent can do is to weep and to cry and to pray and ask God to work in that child's heart. I've counseled many parents. And I will tell you right up front the most difficult thing for the father—it's all difficult for the mother—but the most difficult thing for the father is this: he's lost all control. He has no power. His authority is spurned. And he's totally rejected as the authority of that child.

Multiply that about a million times and apply it to God the Father, and you can understand that the heartache we experience is multiplied many times of the heartache He experiences. What can

you do for a rebellious child? Nothing as a human, except cry and pray and ask the Lord to speak to his heart. Our heavenly Father is likewise grieved over our disobedience. He knows we're going to destroy ourselves. In fact, that's what He said in Hosea 13:9: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help." But they would not look to Him, and they just went on to their destruction. Hold Isaiah chapter 1, but look in the book of Psalms, Psalm 78, verse 40. Note what the Scripture says concerning Israel and what they did to God: "How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert?" Have you ever thought about God being grieved? The Bible teaches us basically the same thing in Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed on the day of your redemption." Turn over in your Bibles to the book of Isaiah 43. Let me show you a verse. I don't know if you've ever thought about this or not, but I want you to see how grievous our sins must be to our heavenly Father.

Isaiah 43. We are in a covenantal bond with Him. He is our Father. We are His children. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is our head and we are His body. So we are one with Him. In Isaiah 43:24, our Lord says to Israel, "Thou hast brought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices." In other words, you didn't honor Me, you didn't worship Me, you didn't respect Me, but "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, and hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins. Can you imagine the blasphemy involved when we as His people sin against Him? Since we were in that covenantal bond and since we were His body and He's our head, we make Him to serve with our sins. Let's go back to Isaiah chapter 1. So much for that review. Take up now where we left off last week. Look in verse 3 and consider not only the heartache of rebellious children, which I just mentioned in verse 2, but now the haughtiness of rebellious children in verse 3. He says, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

The Haughtiness of Rebellious Children (Verse 3)

The word "haughty" is often used in our day. We tend to put a southern definition with it, making it mean "highfalutin." Some

individual thinks he's highfalutin; that's a haughty individual. But the word means more: to be arrogant, inconsiderate, disdainful, and contemptuous. Look at verse 3 again.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Sin had so perverted the minds and understanding of Israel that they reached a level beneath the animals. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." What is God saying? These dumb animals know where they eat, who owns them, and from where their bread is buttered. But He said, "My people does not know. My people does not consider."

If you don't believe this, come to where Alice and I live and observe firsthand at feeding time. All our animals are in the proper place, at the proper time, ready to eat, because they know where and when they get fed. Usually they're waiting. When they see me coming, their eyes lock on me like radar, tracking every movement.

I have a certain ritual: I feed certain ones first. They know that and wait until their time. After feeding, if they see me riding a golf cart, they still lock on me, thinking maybe he's bringing an extra snack. If one does not show up at feeding time, I know something is wrong. Either that animal is sick; if it's a cow, she's probably having a calf. But they are there when it comes time to eat. Those animals love me. They'll rub against me, lick me. I tell everybody, you don't know what love is until you get the slobber of a newborn calf all over you. But look what God said: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. But," He said, "my people doth not know, they do not consider." How is it that we do not understand that everything we have and everything given to us is from the hand of our Creator and our God?

How can we be so callous toward the One who feeds us? How can we be so ungrateful, so unthankful and so unappreciative? The Bible says in James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift coming down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Every good gift you have comes from God. Your breath comes from God. Your food comes from God. Your friends come from God. Your family comes from God. Your ministry comes from God. Everything comes from Him.

So why do we not recognize this? This is what He's complaining about in verse 3. Israel became dumber than animals. Animals had more sense than His professing people. They recognized who fed them and where their home was, but He said, "My people does not know, my people does not consider." We have sired a generation of people that are totally ungrateful and unthankful and unappreciative.

Not only have we been guilty of that ourselves and guilty in teaching that, if you would look at our government, our government has made a nation of people like that because it has given and given and given when there is no desert and no work. And now everybody just expects everything to be handed to them on a silver platter. Hold Isaiah 1, but turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 17. Begin reading there with verse 11. Watch carefully.

"And it came to pass, as He went out of Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off." In those days, leprosy was a death sentence. You were cut off from family, friends, villages, and towns; you had to live by yourself or with other lepers. Whenever you saw anyone coming, you had to place your hand to warn them and holler, "Unclean, unclean, unclean." So these ten lepers sat afar off—they could not come near. They lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And when He saw them, He said, "Go, show yourselves unto the priests."

"And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at His feet and giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that return to give glory to God, save this stranger.'" The implication is that the other nine were Hebrews. But here's a Samaritan, so despised and hated by the Jews especially, and yet he is the only one that returned to give thanks.

Think about this: nine-tenths of the men that were healed just kept on going and totally ignored the gift given to them. They assumed, presumed, took for granted, and believed it was owed to

them. Only one in ten turned and gave God thanks for what God had done for him. Have you stopped today just to think what God has done for you? Alice and I and Granny Doris were traveling last night, and just as we turned on 82, off 231, seven or eight miles down the road, speed limit was 55.

I had to wait on a semi truck at the stop sign, and they're slow. But I waited on him. About seven or eight miles down the road, there was a crossroads where the ones to the left and right had the stop sign, and we were within a hundred yards of it. Alice and I looked, and my mouth fell open because some man shot through those stop signs at about 60 miles an hour. I looked at Alice and said, "Did you see that?" She said, "I did." I said, "We better thank the Lord right now for that old slow truck that slowed us down. We better thank the Lord that the Lord protected us."

That's no accident. When you stop and think of the goodness, graciousness, and kindness that God has given to each one of us, where are we when it comes time to thank Him? Where are we when it comes time to recognize His blessings? Why is it we do not recognize those blessings? Is it because we're haughty, selfish, arrogant, rebellious?

Let me put it another way. Are we not as smart as an ox or an ass? "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but my people doth not know, and my people doth not consider." Hold Isaiah 1, but go back to Psalm 49. Look first at verse 12: "Nevertheless man being in honor, abideth not, is like the beasts that perish." Adam was in honor, but he did not abide, and he became like a beast. Skip down to verse 20: "Man that is in honor and understandeth not, is like the beast that perish." So what God says is this: if you don't understand where your bread is buttered, if you don't understand where everything you have comes from, you're like a dumb beast.

Look in your Bibles to Isaiah 56 and verse 10, just showing you how men are often compared to animals, and the dumbest of the dumb many times. Look what God says about His watchmen or His shepherds: His watchmen are blind and they are all ignorant. They're all dumb dogs.

They cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. They're all dumb dogs. There's nothing dumber than a dumb dog. We've had one that I can remember. That dog wouldn't come when you called him. The dog wouldn't listen. That was the dumbest, stupidest dog I've ever seen in my life. That's what God says. What good is a dumb dog? How would you like a dog that greeted the home invader and the burglar with a good lick and lying down? That's a dumb dog.

Look in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 8 and verse 7. Look what God says. Jeremiah 8 verse 7. In fact, let's read verse 6 so that you can really see it. Jeremiah 8, verse 6. Jeremiah says, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright." That is the people. They spake not aright. "No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?'" "Everyone turned to his own course as the horse rushes into battle." Now look what God says. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth his appointed times, and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But my people doth not know the judgment of the Lord." So Israel then would not even consider the source of her blessings, nor would they consider the source of their judgment. And God says you're actually lower than the brute beast or the dumb animals, because at least the ox knoweth his master, and the ass his crib, but my people doth not know. They refuse to look to their God.

The Hatefulness of Rebellious Children (Verse 4)

If you'll go back in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 1, not only looking then at the haughtiness of rebellious children, but I want you to look in verse 4 at the hatefulness of rebellious children. The hatefulness. Verse 4, look what God says: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord. They provoke the Holy One of Israel into anger. They're going away backwards." Now, we have just said that rebellious children are hateful children. Have you ever wondered why we say that? The first answer is because it's the truth. The second answer is because that's what God says. God says that rebellious children are hateful children. He says exactly the same thing. I want you to notice how He describes this rebellious nation. He begins in verse 4, and He says, "Ah, sinful nation." Now, the word

"Ah," it's not actually a word of astonishment, but it is a word of denunciation. It is also translated in our Bibles as "woe." God is literally saying, "Woe sinful nation" or "Woe to the sinful nation." The sinful nation was a nation that had incurred guilt by sinning, by disobedience and rebellion.

The term "sinful" designates a people that have fallen short and not lived up to the standard of righteousness God has laid out for them. What had God ordained for Israel to be? He says, "Woe sinful nation." Look in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 19, hold Isaiah 1. In Exodus 19 verse 6, God says, "And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which I shall speak unto the children of Israel." So they were to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. How does God address them? A sinful nation. They are no longer a holy nation; they are a sinful nation.

America was established on Christian principles, but we're no longer a Christian nation; we are a sinful nation. In verse 4, He goes again to show the hatefulness: "A people laden with iniquity." The word "laden" refers to that which is massive, heavy, oppressive, and weighty—a weight that presses down with great force, a burden impossible to escape. The exceeding heavy weight is that of iniquity, and "iniquity" refers to perversion, depravity, and mischief. So God says they're weighted down, pressed and oppressed by their own rebellion and iniquity, something pressing down heavily upon them. Verse 4 again: "A sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers." When they're called "a seed of evildoers," He's not referring to their fathers, but to them. They had then planted a right seed, but now they are a degenerate and wicked generation of men. Let me show you. Hold Isaiah 1 and turn to Isaiah chapter 5, beginning with verse 1. Here's exactly what God is talking about when He calls them a seed of evildoers.

"Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard at a very fruitful hill. And He fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof and planted it with the choicest vine and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein, and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you betwixt Me and My

vineyard." He appeals to Judah and Jerusalem, the same ones addressed in Isaiah chapter 1. He asks in verse 4, "What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? Now go to, I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up, and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trod down. And I will lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned or digged, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that there rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant. And He looked for judgment, but behold, oppression, for righteousness, but behold, a cry."

What did God just say? I planted you a right vine, but you turned into a degenerate vine. I did everything I could for you, and you refused it. If you follow Isaiah 5, the only thing left is destruction. So go back to Isaiah chapter 1. We are still looking at the hatefulness of rebellious children. He says, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers," and now, "children that are corruptors." They are children that pervert, mar, destroy, ruin, and corrupt—degenerate, debased, debauched, decadent, decayed, degraded, depraved, and desolate. They corrupt everything they touch. They are absolutely worthless, useless, good for nothing. Believe me, I know children like that, grown children like that. They were not only merely corrupt themselves.

But they were corrupting others by their example. This is always the case: when people become infidels and profligate themselves, they always seek to make other people just like them. Our Lord said in Matthew 23:15, "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for you compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, he is twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Our heavenly Father is not politically correct when it comes to profiling. He just calls it like He sees it: you are a sinful nation, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. And in verse 4, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, for they have forsaken the Lord. That is the phrase I want. This is the reason He reproves them with such sharpness and severity: they have forsaken Him. The peculiar heinousness of their sin was that it was against God. They

had indeed forsaken God, not necessarily in their profession, but simply by their practice and in reality, because they were neglecting Him, His worship, His service, and they were refusing His yoke and refusing to submit to His law. Jeremiah said something similar in Jeremiah 2:12-13: "Be astonished, O you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. Be ye very desolate, saith the Lord, for My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and they have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." So He says they've forsaken the Lord. And then in verse 4 again, He says, "They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger." They blasphemed. They had so despised God as to excite His righteous indignation and anger. They had provoked Him by their numerous sins, both of omission and commission. To show you the stupidity of people.

If I had a man in this room who was six feet four, 250 pounds, muscled up, a martial artist to the nth degree—agile, flexible, quick, could fight like you would not believe—how many of you would go up and provoke him, spit in his face, and challenge him to fight? None of you, because you're not that dumb. I don't know many people stupid enough to do that, saved or unsaved. But isn't it amazing? We refuse to provoke someone who might beat us into the dirt physically, yet we think nothing of provoking a holy, righteous God, who can do more than beat us into the dirt.

What did our Lord say? Don't fear him who is able only to kill the body, but fear Him who is able, after He has killed, to cast body and soul into hell. That's who you ought to fear—the sovereign God of heaven and earth. So Israel, in departing from God, in forsaking God, were actually challenging Him, daring Him to exercise His justice. Peter said in 1 Peter 5:5, "God resisteth the proud, but He giveth grace unto the humble." The word "resist" means to fight against. God fights against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Have you ever stopped to think? If God wants to destroy us, all He has to do is withhold our breath and we'll die. If it is that easy to kill us, what do you think it's going to be like for the man whom God rises up in battle array against? I don't want to challenge God or provoke Him to do His worst.

Look at verse 4 again. He's showing us the hatefulness of rebellious children: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord. They provoke the Holy One of Israel into anger." Here it is: "They are going away backwards." The words "going away" literally mean to become estranged or alienated. If I am facing Ron and I go away backwards, I turn my back to him. God is saying that Israel has turned to Him the back and not the face. Here's the question: if you and I are talking and you're trying to convey something important to me, and I simply turn my back to you and walk off—

I don't say a word. I just turn my back and walk off. Would you be insulted? Would you believe that I had disrespected you and have no concern for you and your needs? Sure you would. God kept saying, I've sent prophets rising early and sending them, and you just turned your back to Me and walked off. Look in your Bible to Jeremiah chapter 2.

Here's a good illustration. Jeremiah 2:27: "Saying to a stock, 'Thou art my father,' and to a stone, 'Thou hast brought me forth,' for they have turned their back unto Me and not their face. But in the time of their trouble, they will say, 'Arise and save us.'" They turned their back on the living God and bowed down to a stock, a tree stump or a stone—no matter how beautiful—and said, "You're our God." Thus they utterly revolted against God, rebelled against Him, and turned aside to what they desired. In doing that, they expressed their contempt and hatred toward God. God said in Proverbs 1:30, "They would have none of My counsel. They despised all of My reproof." That's exactly what contemptuous people do.

No wonder God said in Jeremiah 44:4, "Howbeit I sent unto you My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate.'" God pleaded with you, but while I was speaking, you just turned your back to Me and walked off. Sin is a hateful thing to God. For Israel and for us, it was a sin to mock anything holy. It was a double sin to mock God, the Holy One. It was a triple sin for Israel to mock God, who was to be the Sanctifier of Israel and the One who required Israel's sanctification. Therefore, He should have been sanctified by Israel according to His holiness.

If you'll look in your Bibles to Leviticus 19, verses 1 and 2: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and saying to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.'" Israel was to sanctify God, but they turned their back to Him. One last point today: look in Isaiah chapter 1 again, verse 5. Lord willing, we'll finish the rest of this message next week, but consider the hardness of rebellious children. Our Lord asks, "Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."

The Hardness of Rebellious Children (Verse 5)

I am using the word "hardness" exactly the way the Scripture does. Proverbs 29:1 says, "He that being often reproved, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Proverbs 28:14 teaches, "Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." This word "hardness" is the same word when God called Israel stiff-necked in Exodus 32:9: "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'I've seen this people. And behold, it is a stiff-necked people.'"

So when you hear the word "hardness," the hardness of rebellious children, it speaks of their incorrigibility, their unwillingness to repent, their deliberate and premeditated resistance to anything that is right and true and holy. Humanly speaking, when you have a hardened, rebellious child, nothing will deter them, nothing will change them, nothing will stop them, nothing will hinder them. They will persevere in their rebellion to their own destruction.

It may surprise you to learn that according to the Scripture, there is a time when chastisement and punishment will no longer avail. Proverbs 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." "Chasten thy son," what's the next phrase? "While there is hope." In other words, there comes a time that chastening will not do any good. There's no hope of correcting him once he's established in his pattern of rebellion and disobedience and wickedness. That's why He said in verse 5, "Why should you be stricken anymore? Why would you be whipped anymore? Why would you be chastised anymore?"

"You will revolt more and more, the whole head sick and the whole heart is faint." I know of one father who had a rebellious son, and he heard a message on discipline. The father went home, and the son had done something wicked, and the father was going to whip him. When he drew back the switch to hit the boy, the boy just balled up his fist and knocked his daddy flat. "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Let me ask you, what is to be done to a child who will no longer be corrected and will no longer receive instruction? The answer is—that's the only answer—he's to be left alone to go his own way, do his own thing, plunge headlong into destruction. His parents, his brothers and sisters will forsake him, not by choice, but by necessity, because he'll want nothing to do with them if they want to do what is right and holy. So he has to be left to go his own way.

You know what God said concerning Israel in Hosea chapter 4 verse 17? "Ephraim is joined to idols. Let him alone." Do you remember in Matthew chapter 15, the disciples came to our Lord and said, "Know You not that the Pharisees were offended at Your teaching?" Our Lord said, "Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, they'll both fall into the ditch."

Now, let me ask you a question. If the only thing that we can do to our rebellious children is to let them alone—yes, we cry for them, yes, we pray for them—but you can't make a child do what is right. You can try to teach it, you can try to talk to it, but you can't make him. He's going to do what he wants to do. The only thing you can do is let him alone.

There is a principle in Scripture and that principle is this: if we sin, we suffer. And there's some who will not learn until they get to the pig pen, like the prodigal. But have you ever stopped and thought about this fact? If all we can do to our rebellious children is let them alone, what will it be like if God left us alone? Do you realize if God wants to destroy us, the easiest way is for Him to just leave us alone? We'll destroy ourselves. Can you imagine what it's like to be left? What did He say?

"Ephraim is joined to idols. Let him alone." What did our Lord say? "Let them alone." Can you imagine what it must be like to

receive no mercy, no grace, no loving kindness, no goodness, no special favors? Can you imagine what it must be like to be left alone by God? For the rebellious, all the joy they will ever have is what they have in this world, in their rebellion, in their sin—a perverted joy that will hasten them to their own destruction. God said, "Why would you be stricken anymore? Why would I waste My time trying to chasten a rebellious child?" The only thing you're going to do is revolt more and more, because your whole head is sick and your whole heart is faint. So God said, I'll let you alone, and you will destroy yourself.

I have two applications. First, are you a rebellious child or an obedient child? He said in 1 Peter 1:14, "As an obedient child, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lust in your ignorance." An obedient child obeys God and His law; a rebellious child disobeys God. So are you a rebellious child or an obedient child?

Applications: Obedient vs. Rebellious Children and the One-Tenth vs. Nine-Tenths

Second, what group do you run with? Are you in the nine-tenths group that are unthankful, ungrateful, and unappreciative of everything God does for you? Or are you in that one-tenth group where you return on a daily basis to give thanks and praise and worship to God for your life, health, and blessings? Are you the one that pauses all throughout the day just to say, "Thank You, Father, for life and health and sleep, and rest, and family, and friends, and good times. Thank You." Have you ever thought what it is just to be blessed with the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, just to be able to read the Scriptures? Are you in the nine-tenths, or are you a one-tenther who gives God the praise for everything in your life?

Father, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Jesus Christ. We thank You for Your love and Your grace and Your mercy and Your goodness and Your kindness.

Lord, I pray that You would make each one of us a one-tenther. Help us be the one, Lord, that returns and kneels and worships You and thanks You, Father, for all that You do for us. And Lord, we have to confess and acknowledge we are what we are by the grace of God.

We have what we have by the grace of God. And whatever we have, whatever we will have, whatever we will be, it will still only be by the grace of God. And we're thankful. And we praise and acknowledge Thee, the Giver of all gifts and the Giver of life. And we ask You, Father, to make us more obedient, more holy, more godly, more thankful, more appreciative. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Fruit of Sin

Part Three

Introduction and Review

Isaiah 1, verse 1: “The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity. A seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger.”

“They are going away backward. Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are

burned with fire, your land strangers devoured in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers."

"And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been a Sodom and we should have been made like unto Gomorrah."

Two weeks ago, I began this message and pointed out that there were three main points. I began in verse two with the witnesses summoned, where God says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth." Throughout the Bible, God often calls heaven and earth as witnesses against his rebellious people. Evidently, everyone in Judah and Jerusalem was corrupt and rebellious; therefore, none would testify with the Lord. He summons heaven and earth to be witnesses.

Secondly, we saw in verse two the warning spoken: "The Lord has spoken." Once God speaks, we are to hear and listen.

Especially when God speaks in anger, as He is doing in Isaiah chapter one, we must consider the wickedness stated: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." We need to consider the heartache of rebellious children. God places this in a situation that you and I can easily comprehend and explain.

In verse 3, we need to consider the haughtiness of rebellious children: "The ox knoweth his owner, and his ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know my people doth not consider." The word haughtiness does not necessarily mean to be proud or high-minded. It also means to be inconsiderate and undisciplined. Once sin gets hold of an individual, it reduces him more than an animal, because even the so-called dumb animals know their own master's crib and the place where they are fed.

In verse 4, we saw the hatefulness of rebellious children: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They've forsaken the Lord. They provoke the Holy One of Israel unto anger. They're going away backwards."

We also saw the hardness of rebellious children. In verse 5, He says, "Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints." There comes a time when discipline and chastisement simply will not work. That is why the Bible says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

Now we come to the last subpoint: the harvest of rebellious children. God pleaded over and over with His rebellious people, yet they would not hearken and would not repent. In Jeremiah 44:4, God said, "Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate." He was talking about sin.

The Harvest of Rebellious Children

In 2 Chronicles 36, beginning with verse 15, we see how wicked, rebellious, and disobedient the children of Israel really were. The passage begins, "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place."

"And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, that is, His prophets, rising up at times and sending because He had compassion on His people, on His dwelling place." Whenever God is going to exercise compassion, He always sends a preacher. He always sends someone to declare His Word. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against the people till there was no remedy. Therefore he, the Lord, brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with a sword, and the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young men, or maiden, or old man, or him that stooped for age. He gave them all into his hand.

The people refused to listen. God sent messengers over and over and over, but all they did was mock and ridicule. There comes a time when judgment is around the corner. God said in Psalm 81:13, "Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me and Israel had walked in my ways." They did not.

And so he grieved for that. They continued in their rebellion against him. In Isaiah, chapter one, verse six, God says, "From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but

wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

The Picture of a Sick, Beaten Man

He is going to show us the harvest of rebellious children in two ways: first, in the picture of a sick, beaten man, and second, in how that relates to the nation. Most people are willing, desirous, and even eager to sow their wild oats. They love the sin, the pleasures of the flesh, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes. The only problem is that they are willing and eager to sow those wild oats, but they always want to leave before the harvest matures. It does not work like that, if you really want to know why people are so wicked and so evil.

The Apostle Paul explains in Romans 3:18, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” When an individual does not fear God, he does not fear to disobey, dishonor, and disrespect Him. The problem with sowing our wild oats and doing that which is wicked and ungodly is that we always reap exactly what we sow. That is why God said in Galatians 6:7–8, “Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.”

Now look again at verses 6 and 7. Verse 6 says, “From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores.” “They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Verse 7 continues: “Your country is desolate. Your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devoured in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers.” Here the resemblance between a man who is sick, severely beaten, wounded, and entirely livid and sore, and a land perfectly desolate, destroyed, and devoured, is given as a picture of the harvest of rebellious children.

The Desolation of the Nation

When God says to Judah and Jerusalem, “Your country is desolate,” it is a Hebrew expression that is exceedingly emphatic, literally meaning, “Your country is perfectly desolate, destroyed and

devoured." It is a country completely and totally in ruins. Here is a perfect picture and illustration of Romans 14:7: "For none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." What God is telling us in Isaiah 1 is that rebellious children basically destroyed the country. Yet most people think, "It is my sin. Sin does not affect anybody but me." When you reprove, rebuke, or exhort someone in sin, they will say, "It's my business. It's my life. Leave me alone."

Sin's Corporate Consequences

What they fail to understand is this: their sin always affects more than themselves. It affects their family, their church, and their society. Eventually, it will affect the nation itself. Did Adam's sin affect only himself? No. Did the sins of the antediluvians—that is, those who lived before the flood—affect only themselves? No. Did the sins of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah affect only them? No. God destroyed not only Sodom and Gomorrah, but also the cities of the plain. Did the sins of Jacob affect only himself? No. What about the sins of Levi and Simeon?

The truth is that our sins always affect the lives of others. No one ever escapes the destruction and devastation of sin.

At the beginning of this message, I told you that there is an application and implication we can derive from Isaiah chapter 1. If, in America, we think for one minute that somehow we are going to escape the harvest we have sown, we need to think again. If we think we will escape the just wrath and punishment of God for the sin of legalized murder through abortion; legalized fornication through sodomy and gay marriage; the overlooking of adultery and fornication; the continued theft, fraud, and deceit of the Federal Reserve System and the fractional reserve banking system; the political sins of socialism, communism, and Marxism; and the overall idolatry of America, we had better read Isaiah chapter 1 all over again.

Individual sins always break out into societal sins, and societal sins always break out into national sins. It is as God said in Hosea 8:7, "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."

Application to America

Unless there is individual repentance, which leads to familial repentance, which leads to ecclesiastical repentance, and which ultimately would lead to national repentance, then, as in Isaiah chapter 1, all we can expect is the righteous judgment of God. Why? Because God is not mocked. We are not only going to receive judgment; we are already under judgment. The truth of the matter is this: the more we refuse to acknowledge it, repent, confess, and turn from our sins, the more intense, frequent, and severe the judgment will become.

All you have to do is read Amos chapter 4, verses 6 through 13. God would send one judgment. They would fail to repent. God would send another judgment, and they would still fail to repent. Then God would send another judgment, over and over. With each judgment, there was an increasing intensity and severity. Obviously, they did not hear, answer, or turn.

Look around our country today. We have floods and droughts. An article the other day said that drought is now affecting fourteen states in this country. Many individuals who work in the agricultural sector have totally lost their crops. We have floods, droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes, plagues, pestilences, and famines. These are just some of God's judgments.

There is a passage in Ezekiel chapter 14, verse 21, when God is going to send His judgment against Jerusalem: "For thus saith the Lord God, how much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword and the famine and the noisome beast and the pestilence to cut off from it man and beast."

It may surprise you to understand that God has an arsenal. God has an armory. God has many weapons He can use to destroy a nation. In Jeremiah 50 and verse 25, we read: "The Lord has opened his armory and has brought forth the weapons of his indignation, for this is the work of the Lord in the land of the Chaldeans." The Lord has opened His armory and brought forth the weapons of His indignation.

Do you think that God will not judge sin? Do you think that God will not judge our sin? Do you think that somehow America shall escape the judgment of God?

The Faithfulness of God in Judgment

Let me point something out. The very faithfulness of God is at stake. I want you to hold Isaiah 1, but look in Isaiah 11 and verse 5. Here we are reading about Messiah: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Now, the reins speak of a heart. So the very heart of our sovereign God is the heart of faithfulness. He is the faithful God.

Now let me show you how that works out in light of Isaiah 1. Hold Isaiah 1, but look in your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy 7, the fifth book in the Old Testament. Let us begin reading there with verse 9. Note the word faithful in relation to God here: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keepeth his commandments to a thousand generations."

Now watch: "And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hateth him. He will repay him to his face."

God is designated in verse 9 as the faithful God. May I ask, in what area is God faithful? The answer is that He is faithful in each and every area. He is faithful in all areas. Verse 9 teaches that God is faithful to His covenant and keeps mercy with those who love and obey Him. But when you get to verse 10, it teaches that God is faithful to judge and destroy those who disobey Him and hate Him. Notice the phrase, "He will not be slack to him that hateth him." Simply stated, God is not going to cut anyone any slack, and He will not be slack in judging His enemies. He will go ahead and destroy them.

God is equally faithful in sending His judgment as He is in sending grace and mercy. He is the faithful God. God is faithful in disciplining and chastening even His own children. God does not fail.

As parents, many times we threaten to discipline our children, but we never do it. We fail to follow through. But God is not like that. David said in Psalm 119:75, “I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and in Thy faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me.” It is the very faithfulness of God that guarantees not only God’s mercy and grace, but also guarantees His judgment as well.

Now, if you go back to Isaiah 1:7, I want you to look at what God says: “Your country is desolate. Your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devoured in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers.” I want you to consider some verses with me. The judgment described in Isaiah is not an empty warning; God had already declared what would happen to a disobedient people.

In Leviticus 26, God pronounces His curses upon a disobedient people. He says, “I will also send wild beast among you which shall rob you of your children and destroy your cattle and make you few in number and your highways shall be desolate.” In verse 33 He says, “And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.” Verse 43 says, “...the land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lie desolate without them.” These words explain the desolation spoken of in Isaiah.

“And they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred My statutes.”

Deuteronomy 28 explains what would happen when they disobeyed God, violated the covenant, and violated His law. God is saying, this is what is going to happen to you when you disobey Me, when you violate the covenant and violate My law. If I had time to read all of Deuteronomy 28, it would surprise you, because God is telling them exactly what is going to happen. “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flyeth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young.”

"And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed, which also shall not leave thee either corn,

wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kind, or flocks, or sheep, until he have destroyed thee, and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest throughout all the land, and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee."

God is saying, here is a picture of entire destruction and desolation. It is going to befall your land and your cities because of your rebellion.

In Micah, chapter 6, verses 14 through 16, we find the same thought: "Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied. And thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee, and thou shalt take hold, but thou shalt not deliver. And that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap, and thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with oil, and sweet wine, but thou shalt not drink wine. For the statutes of Omri, who is the father of Ahab, for the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you walk in their councils, that is, in their statutes, that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof a hissing. Therefore, you shall bear the reproach of my people."

Note what God has done. He has faithfully warned and faithfully described the judgment that would befall a rebellious people. When they refused to hear His word and repent, He faithfully sent that judgment. Hebrews 6:18 tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. That is true. But it is also impossible for God to fail. He said in Isaiah 46:10, "My counsel shall stand. And I will do all my pleasure." Whatever God decrees and determines to be done shall be done. He will not lie, and He will not fail.

Go back to Isaiah 1 and look at verse 7. Here is something particularly distressing, or at least it should be. In verse 6, Isaiah gives you a parallel between a man sick, beaten, bruised, and left for dead. Then he tells you that this is what your country is like, or is going to be like under this judgment: “Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devoured in your presence. And it is desolate as overthrown by strangers.”

There is one part of this judgment God pronounced against Israel that I want particularly to emphasize. It is distressing, and I might also add that it is particularly applicable to our situation in America. He says in verse 7, “Your land strangers devoured in your presence. It is desolate as overthrown by strangers.”

Strangers Devouring the Land

The word stranger in Hebrew is zur, which literally means a stranger, a foreigner, or an enemy. It also refers to a prostitute. Look, if you would, in Proverbs 2, beginning with verse 16: “To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” A harlot is therefore referred to as a strange woman throughout the Bible, and as a stranger.

Do you remember Jephthah? He was cast out from the family. Why? In Judges 11:2 we read: “And Gilead's wife bare him his sons, and his wife's sons grew up. And they thrust out Jephthah from them, and said, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house, for thou art the son of a strange woman.” Very obviously, Gilead had Jephthah by a strange woman, and the family cast him out. Whenever you read the word stranger in the Bible, it refers to an enemy, a foreigner, someone who is not of the family, kindred, or nation.

In Exodus chapter 30 and verse 33, there was a holy anointing oil made only for the priests. God said, "Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall be cut off from his people." In other words, death, for using the holy anointing oil upon a stranger. Do you realize that part of the curse and judgment of God upon the wicked is that strangers will devour his goods? In Psalm 109, verse 11, we read: "Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor." The stranger is someone who is not of the family, not of the kindred, and not of the nation.

Listen to several passages and notice the word stranger. In Ezekiel 11 and verse 9, God says, "And I will bring you out of the midst thereof and deliver you into the hands of strangers. And I will execute judgments upon you." In Ezekiel 28 and verse 10: "Now shall die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers.

For I have spoken it, saith the Lord God." In Ezekiel 30 and verse 12, God says, "And I will make the rivers dry and sell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waste and all that is therein by the hand of strangers. I, the Lord, have spoken it."

In Hosea 7 and verse 9, concerning Israel, God says, "Strangers have devoured his strength. And he knoweth it not. Yea, gray hairs were here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not." Notice what he said: "Strangers have devoured his strength." Then in Hosea 8 and verse 7, he says, "They have sown the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind. It hath no stalk, the bud shall yield no meal. If so it yield, strangers shall swallow it up."

Strangers are foreign enemies that invade the land, eat up its resources, destroy its productivity, confiscate, use, and abuse the inhabitants, and could care absolutely nothing about the land. When strangers come into a land, the only thing they can consider is getting what they can get and taking what they can take.

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 6:1-6 (KJV)

And destroying whatever is left. The attitude of strangers is, “If I can have it, no one can. I'll destroy it.” I want to show you a wonderful biblical statement concerning this truth. In Judges, chapter six, you will hear about the Midianites. Judges, chapter six, verse one.

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. And because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which were in the mountains and caves and strongholds. And so it was when Israel had sown that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. Now look what happens. Look what the strangers do to the land. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth till thou comest to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor oxen, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it.”

And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. What did they do? They literally destroyed the land.

Go back to Isaiah chapter 1 and look at verse 7. Think with me about America. Is not the judgment that God applied to Judah and Jerusalem happening in our own land because of our sin and rebellion? Isaiah 1:7 says, "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and as desolate as overthrown by strangers." Here is an extremely agitating and calamitous situation. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, and strangers devour your land in your presence. You can see it, but you cannot stop it. You can see it, but you cannot hinder it. You can see it, but you cannot do anything about it. You simply watch your country, your society, and your home destroyed by strangers.

Undoubtedly, Isaiah 1:7 referred to the invading Babylonian army. They were strangers, the enemy, foreigners who came in to destroy absolutely everything. You can read in Jeremiah and Lamentations what they did to Jerusalem: how they broke down the wall, burned the temple, destroyed the city, murdered the people, carried some away into captivity, and literally pillaged and ruined absolutely everything.

But have you understood that strangers can devour your country without a war? Have you considered that strangers can make your land desolate without a war? Some of you have seen, and if you have not, I urge you to look at the pictures all over the internet of what the illegals have done in Southern California and Southern Arizona. You are talking about a trashed country, filth, murder, and mayhem. Even the federal government put up a sign warning the people of Arizona not to go into southern Arizona because of the illegal immigrants who are destroying, murdering, and killing everything and everybody they can find. Have you seen the pictures of Detroit, Michigan? Look at the cities in Michigan, especially Detroit, and look at the buildings and towns—how everything is absolutely desolate.

I just got an email. You can click on the link and hear for yourself that Michigan is now sending out food applications in English, Spanish, and Aramaic. They have press two for English and press

three for Aramaic because so many Muslims have taken over Michigan. I will never forget when Alice and I were driving through and saw this humongous mosque right by the interstate a number of years ago. You stop and think, how in the world could something like that happen in supposedly a Christian land? You say, "Oh, we're tolerant." Do you think they're tolerant? Try to build a church in Iraq or Iran. No, they kill Christians there.

The point I'm trying to make is this: Strangers are devouring our land in our presence. Just look at what one illegal immigrant has done to the White House and to the country. Look at the foreign nationals in our own government who have dual citizenships. Israelis, Muslims—everyone now knows Congressman Weiner's wife. Do you realize she's a Muslim? She is exceedingly close to Hillary Clinton. Do you realize her mother and her brother are tied to the militant Muslim Brotherhood? Here is a Muslim working with the Secretary of State who is now privy to state secrets. All I'm trying to show you is this.

A Mexican was executed for murder and rape. Washington, D.C., tried to get the state of Texas to pardon him, but Texas did not. He should have been executed, but do you realize he was in this country for fifteen years? His last words right before he died were, "Viva Mexico." He was more concerned with Mexico than with America.

Here's what is happening, folks: Our country is being destroyed before our eyes. The sad thing is that we are absolutely helpless. All we can do is sit back and watch with horrified and shocked expressions while our constitutional liberties and freedom are slowly and gradually destroyed and taken from us. What God said to Judah and Jerusalem through Isaiah, in Isaiah 1:7, is happening here in this country.

We've lost control of our lives, our families, our churches, our states, and our nation. Strangers—those who are enemies to the faith of Jesus Christ and to the foundation upon which this country was built, Christianity—are opposed to our Constitution and seek our destruction and overthrow.

The truth of the matter is this, folks: unless God supernaturally and sovereignly intervenes, all we can do is sit back and watch it

now. I want to ask and answer this question: Since God sent this judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem, how are they left? Look in verse 8: “And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.”

Matthew Henry explains it this way: “Jerusalem itself which was as the daughter of Zion, the temple built on Zion was a mother, a nursing mother to Jerusalem, or Zion itself, the holy mountain, which had been dear to God as a daughter was now lost, deserted and exposed as a cottage in a vineyard, which when the vintage is over, nobody dwells in it or takes care of it and looks as mean and despicable as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and every person is afraid of coming near it, and solicitous to remove its effects out of it as if it were a besieged city.”

He also says, “National impiety and immorality bring national destruction. Canaan, the glory of all the lands, Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth, both became a reproach and a ruin, and sin made them so. It is the great mischief maker.”

So here, wonderful, glorious Jerusalem, the city of David, is left as a cottage and a garden of cucumbers. It is absolutely desolate. You know, America is just about come like that. America the Beautiful has basically become America the ugly. The land of the free has become the land of the serf and servant and slave, and the land of the brave has become the land of the cowards and wimps and apathetic, lethargic couch potatoes who refuse to stand for righteousness, truth, liberty, or anything. And we sit back and allow it all to happen. That is what he said in verse 7: “Your country strangers devoured, in your presence.”

The Remnant and Call to Repentance

What was the ultimate end of Judah and Jerusalem? What will be the ultimate end of America unless there is repentance? Look in verse 9: “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been a Sodom and we should have been made like unto Gomorrah.” What did God do in Sodom and Gomorrah? He sent fire and brimstone and destroyed them. Only Lot and his two daughters actually got out. Everyone else was totally wiped off the face of the earth.

Isaiah 1:9 says, “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant.” Those who escape, escape only by the grace of God. Unless God has mercy upon us, we should be like Sodom and Gomorrah.

The first application is this: the most awful judgment that God can bring upon any people is when He no longer speaks to them or disciplines them. What would you think as a child if your father never spoke to you and never disciplined you, but simply left you alone? You would think, “That is an unusual father.” But when God refuses to speak to us and refuses to discipline us, He is leaving us in our own incorrigibility and rebellion until the day of judgment. What does He say in Revelation 22:11? “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” When God is ready to destroy a people, He is silent toward them. When God refuses to speak, there is nothing but judgment.

The second application is this: the evidence of a nation under the extreme and severe judgment of God, and of a nation about to be destroyed by God, is when its people are made worse by the things or methods God would use to make them better. It is as He said in verse 5: “Why should ye be stricken any more?” You “will revolt more and more.” In other words, discipline no longer works; all it does is make you more rebellious.

Romans 2:4–6 says, “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” But the hardened and impenitent heart “treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.” The goodness, grace, and mercy of God should make us better, and His discipline should make us better. When we fail to respond to them, the only thing left is judgment.

Yet we can rejoice: God will never leave Himself without witness. He will always have His elect, His remnant, and His seven thousand who have never bowed the knee to Baal. God will spare those who are faithful to Him.

We should do like some of the Old Testament prophets and some of the New Testament apostles. We should look back and say, wow, God was so good to us. God delivered us. We need to glory in God's deliverance, and in the fact that what He has done in time past, He may do again now. And what did our Lord say? “Turn ye, turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?” That's true of individuals. It's true of families. It's true of society. It's true of nations.

Our response should be one of repentance and faith. The harvest of rebellious children is awful. I don't know about you, but I don't want that kind of harvest in my life, or my family, or my church, or my nation. And if we don't want it, we need to repent. Do you remember? As wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah were, God was willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if He found ten righteous people. And there's far more than ten in this room. What can you do to be as holy and as godly and as obedient and as righteous as you can be by the grace of God?

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We are so thankful that Thou art on the throne and Thou art our sovereign God. Father, we are in a desperate situation in our nation. Strangers are indeed devouring our land before our eyes, and we're seemingly helpless. Help us, Lord, to know what to do and where to turn. Help us, Heavenly Father, above all, to turn to Thee and to be obedient. We commit ourselves unto Thee and ask, Father, Thy blessings not only upon the preached word, but upon the fellowship meal and upon the celebration that follows. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we ask and pray. Amen.

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