

**BOOK OF ISAIAH**  
**GOD’S WORD TO A BACKSLIDDEN NATION**  
**ISAIAH 1:10-20**

**Introduction**

A few weeks ago I preached a message on the first 9 verses of this Chapter. We said that as we read and study the prophets, we notice that many of the problems that Judah and Israel had are similar to the problems that we have in our own country and even in our Churches today.

We said that what that tells us is that the leaders of our nation and even many in the Church haven’t learned from the History that could have helped them?

Many have gotten away from God’s Book and cast aside the very things that could have kept us from making the same mistakes!

We’re seeing here how God's indictment of Judah is also an indictment against us! What God says about Judah should sound familiar to us, because it is true of our nation! Unfortunately Israel’s sins and mistakes have become ours! Let me remind you in that first message

I. *WE SAW A TENDER GOD! (Vs. 2)*  
*The LORD tenderly raised Israel, and yet they rebelled against Him!*  
*And we said that the LORD has also tenderly raised our nation by giving us so many blessings, and yet now we are rebelling against Him!*

II. *WE SAW A TREACHEROUS PEOPLE! (Vs. 3-8)*

A. *Israel Had Forgotten!*  
*Israel had forgotten that it was God who took care of them and provided for them! Likewise, our nation has forgotten that it is the LORD Who cares and provides for us!*

B. *Israel Had Forsaken!*  
*Israel Had Left The LORD!*  
*They Were A “Sinful Nation!”*  
*They Were A “People Laden With Iniquity!”*  
*They Were “A Seed Of Evil Doers!”*  
*They Were “Children That Are Corrupters!”*  
*Likewise, Our Nation Has Left The LORD!*

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*Israel Had Forgotten...Israel Had Forsaken...*  
*Israel Had Fallen! (Vs. 5-6)*  
*Israel Had Foes! (Vs. 7-8)*

*WE SAW A TENDER GOD...WE SAW A TREACHEROUS PEOPLE*  
III. *WE SAW A TINY REMNANT! (Vs. 9)*

This morning I want us to pick up in verse 10 and see:  
**“GOD’S WORD TO A BACKSLIDDEN NATION”:**

**I. THE LORD DESCRIBED THEM! (Vs 10)**

In comparing His people to **Sodom and Gomorrah** the LORD paints a picture of **just how low** both the rulers and the people of the nation of Israel had fallen!

I want you to turn to ***Ezekiel 16: 47-50!*** This passage gives us a broader detail about **both the nature and sins of Sodom!**

The **main sin** we think about when Sodom is mentioned is their **gross immorality especially their involvement in the sin of homosexuality!** In fact. Sodom became a by-word for the sin of homosexuality! (e.g. Sodomy)

However, we see here that the sins of **Sodom** had a wider base than just the abomination of homosexuality! (And make no mistake, God does call it an **“abomination!”** ***Leviticus 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.***)

Personally, I believe that the sins listed here in ***Ezekiel 16:47-50*** eventually led to Sodom’s involvement in the abomination of homosexuality!

Let’s look at these sins:

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**A. Pride!**

**Pride is literally “arrogance or majesty of self”!**

*It comes from a word that means “to mount up; to rise, to be majestic; arrogance or majesty”*

**Pride is when the heart lifts up itself** above and against both God and man!

**Pride includes vanity, conceit, exalted opinion of self, lower opinion of others, and an exalted view regarding ones own person, appearance or accomplishments.**

**The Bible says that God hates the sin of pride and it is also an abomination to Him!**

*Proverbs 6:16-17–“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 **A proud look...**”*

**The Bible says that God will judge the sin of pride!**

*Proverbs 16:5–“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.”*

**Pride was the first sin! It was the sin that turned angels into devils and demons!**

*Isaiah 14:12-15–“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, **I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”*

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**It was the sin that plunged all of mankind into sin!**

*Genesis 3:6–“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

It is pride that causes a person to say, “*I don’t answer to God. I’m not a sinner. After all it was God who made me this way.*” Listen to me, **to blame one’s perverse ways on God is nothing less than blasphemy!**

*Pride. . .*

**B. Fullness Of Bread! (i.e. The Sin Of Gluttony Or Excess!)**

It was of God’s great mercy that Sodom had plenty, but it was of Sodom’s great sin that she abused the blessings she had been given. (The same is true in our text of Israel...and of us!)

**1. They Were Slaves To Their Appetites!**

They gluttoned themselves with those blessings, ate to excess and drank to excess, and that which was given to them to be a blessing to others with, they used to gratify their own lusts.

Hear the Apostle Paul in *Philippians 3:19–“Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”*

**2. They Were Drunkards!**

i.e. Someone who is drunk is under is under the control of what they are drunk with. (Cf. Eph 5:18)

**3. They Were Sensual!**

i.e. They were devoted to pleasing their senses.

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*"If it feels good, do it."*

They were *"lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."* (2 Timothy 3:4)

*Pride, Gluttony. . .*

**C. Abundance Of Idleness!**

We could call it a dread of labor mixed with a love of ease! Their country was fruitful, and the abundance that they had came relatively easily!

Because of that there was a temptation for them to indulge themselves in slothfulness! Their slothfulness disposed them to all kinds of abominable filthiness! They were idle when they should have been useful!

We need to see that if God is not using us, then Satan will!

Idleness is an inlet to much sin! The men of Sodom, who had become idle, were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly!

Standing waters stagnate and gather filth! In like manner, lives that are full of idleness find the time for all kinds of wickedness and ungodliness!

**D. Oppression!**

*"Neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and needy."* Though she had much wealth, she did little to help others!

Sometimes, if we are not careful, we will turn our heads the other way and ignore the needs of those around us! We can get so wrapped up in self, that we are blinded to the needs of others!

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*1 John 3:17-18—"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

*James 2:15-16—"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"*

*Pride. . .Gluttony. . .Idleness. . .Oppression. . .*

**E. Haughtiness!**

Haughtiness means *"to soar, that is, to be lofty"*!

This is closely akin to **pride!** In fact, we could call it **the outward manifestation of pride!** i.e. It is **to be blatantly and disdainfully proud!**

It is being snobbish, or looking down your nose at others and considering others as riff-raff!

Hold your place and look back at **Isaiah 2:11-17** for a minute!

*Isaiah 13:11—"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."*

*Proverbs 16:18—"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 18:12—"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty. . ."*

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*Pride...Gluttony...Idleness...Oppression...Haughtiness...*

**F. Immorality.**

“Committed abomination” means to do something morally disgusting.

**Genesis 19:4-5** (Cf. *Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:24-32*)

So, we see the sins of the *Sodomites were—Pride, Gluttony, Idleness, Oppression, Haughtiness, and Immorality.*

And now we see here in verse 10 of our text in Isaiah 1 that the LORD was using Sodom and Gomorrah as a metaphor for the condition that the vast majority of His people and their leaders were now in! (*But remember...there was still a remnant!*)

By-and-large the rulers and people under them in Judah and Jerusalem were guilty of the same sins as Sodom!

And how do you think the LORD would describe the condition of our nation when the vast majority of our leaders and the vast majority of the people in our nation today are involved with, involved in promoting, or are OK with the same things IN OUR LAND?

Oh my friend, when we see how the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah faced such severe judgment of God, it should concern us! Because the moral condition of our own nation is not far behind Sodom and Gomorrah if it is behind at all!

But there was something additional. We see not only...  
*THE LORD DESCRIBED THEM!*

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**II. THE LORD DENOUNCED THEM! (Vs 11-15)**

We see here that though Israel was clinging to all their abominations, they kept their garb of religion! They would have, no doubt, described themselves as a religious people...as God's people...and they were religious, but they had ceased to be a godly people!

They were using their external religion as a cloak to cover their iniquity!

They came and continually presented their offerings to God, but in the spiritual condition their hearts were in, of what value were those sacrifices and offerings in the LORD's sight?

The LORD says that these folks were simply treading or trampling His courts! (**vs. 12**)

May God help us not to be guilty of just **trampling on that which belongs to Him!** When people come to Church clinging to their sin and try to do the Sunday thing thinking that it will balance out their sin, they are gravely mistaken!

These folks were so steeped in their sin that even their observance of the appointed days and feasts had become an abomination to the LORD! (**Vs 13-14**)

In other words the LORD was saying, “*I cannot bear the ungodliness and gatherings at festivals.*”

Remember in the New Testament when the Lord Jesus Christ **exposed all the hypocrisies of the Scribes and the Pharisees in His strong denunciations of them in Matthew 23.**

Over and over he told them, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*” as he detailed out the specifics of their hypocrisy!

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They continued to practice their religion while their hearts were full of sin! They saw the practice of their religion as their righteousness not realizing that it showed their unrighteousness because of their heart's condition!

That same guilty combination of religion on the outside while there is sin on the inside that was pervasive in Judaism in Jesus' day has largely developed in most of Christendom in our day!

It is sad that the conscience of a believer can become so seared that a person can practice his or her religion while living in sin and it doesn't even bother them!

We see that the Lord warned His people in **verse 15** that, if they were to stretch out their hands to Him in such a sinful condition, He would hide His eyes from them! And even if they made ever so many prayers He would not hear them, for their hands were full of blood!

God listens to those who lift up holy hands!

*Psalm 24:4-5 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

*1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

The word "blood" there is plural, which points, not merely to murder, but to acts of violence akin to murder...hatred included!

*THE LORD DESCRIBED THEM...DENOUNCED THEM...*

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**III. THE LORD DIRECTED THEM! (Vs 16-20)**

**A. He Directed Them To Clean Up Spiritually! (Vs 16a)**  
**"Wash you, make you clean...!"**

He's not talking about them literally taking a physical bath but He is applying that metaphor to their spiritual lives!  
*Jeremiah 4:14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

*2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

*James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

**B. He Directed Them To Cast Off Their Sin And Cease From Their Sin! (Vs 16b) "...put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil..."** i.e. REPENT!!!

*Ezekiel 18:30-31 30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

*Zechariah 1:3-4 3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. 4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear,*

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*nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.*

*Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

*Ephesians 4:22-24— 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

**C. He Directed Them To Return To And Learn Again The First Principles Of Well-Doing! (Vs 17)**

**D. He Directs Them To Himself! (Vs 18)**

The message of verse 18 invites them to realize both **the graciousness of His appeal** as well as **the justice of His demands**:

**“Come now”** denotes the urgency of the appeal!  
*2 Corinthians 6:2 ...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

**“And let us reason together”** is as if He is challenging them to a trial!

The **scarlet** seems to suggest the deep-dyed character of sin. In Numbers 19:6, when the red heifer was sacrificed for purification from sin. One of the things they cast into the midst of the burning heifer was **scarlet**!

The glaring character of sin is certainly in view, and for the whiteness of snow we need only be reminded of Psalms 51:7.  
*Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

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**E. He Directs Them To Consider The Differences Their Choice Will Make! (Vs 19-20)**

If they would do this and turn from their evil ways, there was mercy for them, both in the removal of their sins and in the prospect of eating the good of the land.

**1. Choice #1—To Be Willing And Obedient! (Vs 19)**

The offer of justifying grace is designed to lead to repentance not to be repented of.

True repentance leads to willingness and obedience, to listen to the voice of God and do His will.

This leads to spiritual blessing.

**2. Choice #2—To Refuse And Rebel! (Vs 20)**

Refusal and rebellion bring certain judgment!  
There is no other choice!

**Conclusion**

Where do you stand with the LORD today? Are you saved? Do you know Him? A continued refusal to be saved...a continued rebellion on your part will be met one day with the words. *“I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:23) Revelation 20:15— And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

If you are saved, is your heart right with God? Our nation is in trouble! And its in trouble because there are so many Christians who are like Israel! We go through the motions of our Christianity while clinging to sin thinking that everything is OK! Its not! God will chasten!

*2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*