

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

### Message #10

### Isaiah 5:1-30

In the late 1920s a family from Virginia (Carter family) achieved popularity by blending together Appalachian lyrics with a guitar and auto harp, which gave birth to what we call “country music.” In the early 1900s, in rural black America, performers traveled from one community to another using a guitar and singing about the loss of love, the pain of poverty and the burden of hard work and that music was called “the blues.”

Both genres of music told sad, true stories and people would sit in a bar and listen to these songs, and think about how depressed their life was. We used to call these “beer drinking songs.” You would listen to a true song that related to your life and then try to drink to forget about the true stories of your life.

**Long before country music or the blues were developed, there was a sad song sung by the prophet Isaiah . It was written and sung not to cause people to drink, but it was written in part because they were drinking. In fact, some had become a bunch of drunks. **Isaiah wrote trying to get Israel to repent .****

Neither the O.T. nor the N.T. required “total abstinence,” but both the O.T. and the N.T. did warn against drunkenness (**Prov. 20:1; 23:29-31; Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:18**). When we come to this text in Isaiah, there can be little doubt that there were many Israelites sitting at banquets and in bars drinking hard liquor and wine to the point of getting drunk. In fact, that point is brought out several times in this chapter (**5:11-12; 22**). So Isaiah, prompted by the Holy Spirit, decided to write and sing a song for them (**5:1**). **This song was based on God’s prophetic truth and the song was indeed sad because it told the truth about Israel and about what God intended to do to Israel .** The song communicates a principle:

**BECAUSE OF ISRAEL’S REBELLION AGAINST GOD, GOD WOULD PERMIT HIS NATION TO BE TRAMPLED AND DESTROYED AND SHE WOULD NOT BECOME WHAT HE ORIGINALLY INTENDED HER TO BECOME.**

God had originally taken the nation Israel out of Egypt and led her to the Promised Land and He gave her specific land and desired to bless her in that land. This should have been the one place in the world that was known for its wonderful relationship with God.

Israel should have been the beautiful, fruitful and useful nation of God. She should have reflected His glory to the world. But that is not what she became. She became a nation that was desolate, dry and useless. So this is the sad song Isaiah sings to Israel in **chapter 5**. This is one song that should have caused Israel to repent, rather than party and drink. But unfortunately, it didn’t work then and isn’t working now.

Now the chapter breaks down into three main parts:

**PART #1 – The song against Israel. 5:1-7**

**We know from verses 3 and 7 that this song is aimed straight at Israel, Jerusalem and Judah.** In our age, you hear a lot about not specifically offending any one; Isaiah is presenting this to specifically offend and convict Israel and Judah and he point-blank names them. If Isaiah were alive today, he would not have any problem presenting the truth of God that would offend people. **Isaiah was never interested in being politically correct to people of this world, but in being pleasing to God by communicating His Word to this world.**

The song is simple - There was a fertile hill which should have been able to produce a fertile vineyard (5:1). The owner went to great pains to cultivate, plant and protect the vineyard, but it produced a worthless crop (5:2). The owner had done everything he could and there was nothing more he could do for his vineyard (5:4). **There was no failure of provisions on God's part. The problem for the failure was not due to Him but to His people.** Therefore, since it would not produce good fruit, He would remove His protection and let it be trampled down and laid to total waste (5:5-6). Nothing good would come to or from this vineyard that should have been so fruitful. God would allow the nation to be consumed by foreign powers (5:5-6a) and God would literally withhold the rain from showering the Promised Land with His blessings (5:6b).

**When you check Israel's history, God has done both things literally.** He has literally allowed this land to be consumed by foreign powers - Syria, Assyria, Babylonian, Persia, Greece, and Rome. In our day, this land is a land in which every inch is threatened by a foreign power. Land that should be Israel's is consumed by the Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians, Egyptians, Saudis and Iraqis. Israel can't even be secure in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. This land is trampled by foreign powers.

Also, when you look today at Israel it is quite clear that it seems to be a land that literally lacks rain. In fact, the annual rainfall average for the Jerusalem area is 4-20 inches (*The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, p. 50). When you compare this to a state like Michigan that averages over 30 inches of rain and another 30 inches plus of snow, you can see how meager this literally is. Israel should have been the one fertile piece of land that blossomed as a rose. It should have been the most fruitful nation in the world. It should have made a wonderful statement for God. But it hasn't to this day and **the reason is because God has withheld His blessings.**

There comes a point when God says concerning His own people - I've done everything I can for you and you will not respond to Me, so I am permitting you to wither into nothing. I will not shower you with My blessings and I will permit you to be trampled and dominated by enemies and you will not produce any good fruit for Me.

What more can God possibly do to show the world He cares about it than provide a sacrifice that can forgive a person of their sins? What more can He do? The answer is nothing. Yet when He asks people to believe in His Son, most will not respond. It is no wonder their lives are barren and dry. It is no wonder that in eternity they will burn.

## **PART #2 – The sins of Israel. 5:8-25**

You will notice that there are six “woe” sins named in this section, which would lead God to punish the nation. Now the sins mentioned here are sins that dominate to the point that they reach national proportions. We are not talking about one or two people slipping up; these sins become dominate at a national level.

### **Woe Sin #1 - The sin of expansion greed . 5:8-10**

The description here is of big corporations putting the little man out of business. Israel was an agricultural society and many families made their living by farming. What was happening is big business was ‘squeezing out’ the little man. The motive was not the good of the people but the greed of a few. God said I have taken note of this and you are going down.

There is nothing wrong with growth and profit and there is nothing wrong with expansion. But when people are just growing and expanding because they are covetous and greedy, there is something evil about it. These people were not ever satisfied with anything and wanted more and more and more, until there was no more. God says I’ll see to it that even if you own ten acres, it will not produce much of anything.

I cannot help but think of massive churches in our day that are bearing no fruit. They have huge buildings and huge offerings, but as far as people growing in their knowledge of the Word of God and in their own spiritual lives, it is barren.

### **Woe Sin #2 - The sin of drunken revelry. 5:11-17**

Apparently, during the time of Isaiah, many people were consuming wine and were so addicted to it that they would actually get up early in the morning to start drinking (5:11).

As you look down through these verses you see a lifestyle, focused on plush parties and self indulgence **but no focus on gaining knowledge of God’s Word**. The people were physically partying, but spiritually they were famished and parched. God’s people were partying and banqueting and drinking as if there were no tomorrow. **They had no commitment and respect for the Word of God and the work of God (5:12)**. In fact, as **verse 14** says “Sheol,” that is the grave, has enlarged its number of fatalities due to the parties, to the point that the number is immeasurable.

We will never be able to calculate the number of fatalities that have been caused by alcohol. The grave is full of people who died because of drink. Drunk drivers kill thousands every year. Who knows how many people have died of liver problems or heart problems due to too much drink. I doubt seriously that we do not even begin to know how many national decisions are being made at cocktail parties with politicians who are half drunk. We are a nation that literally has to warn people that we have a police force out there looking for drunk drivers. Why? Because we are a nation that is totally given to drunken revelry.

From dawn to dusk, Israel's focus was on self pleasure. Their lives were not being lived sacrificially for the Lord. There was no focus on God or His Word, and their lives were given to total self enjoyment. They were out for social pleasure, not spiritual growth.

Can we not see the same atmosphere exists in the United States? Is it not the same true with us? Woe to us, woe to Israel.

**Woe Sin #3** - The sin of religious hypocrisy . **5:18-19**

These people were giving the false impression that they wanted to draw near the Holy One of Israel, when in fact they loved their iniquity and their sin. In fact, they actually say, we will continue to live life our own way, until we see God do something about it. In other words, we will live our lives in our false hypocrisy until God stops us. These people went through the motions of worship, but their hearts were not right with God and they never intended to change. They were not dealing with their sin; they were dragging it along with them. **What these people actually wanted was for God to deliver them, but they did not want to deal with their sin.**

**Woe Sin #4** - The sin of evil deception . **5:20**

What is described in this verse is total moral perversion. This is a terrible sin that actually tries to pervert and twist God's standard of right and wrong. People were so twisted that they called evil good and good evil. They completely reversed the true things of God and substituted them with dark, satanic things. When this kind of thing happens it confuses people as to what truth is.

Are we not seeing this same thing happen in this country? What about the attempt to say that an abominable sin like homosexuality is actually okay in the mind of God? What about the attempt to say that a woman minister is really what God wants for His church? What about the attempt to say that any band playing electric guitars and drums in church is really worship? This is all evil deception, which calls evil good and good evil. As we near the end, things that God specifically calls evil will be that which most will call good.

Let me cite just one example. God, Himself, in no uncertain terms says He does not want His people getting a tattoo (Lev. 19:28). Now many of God's people have gone ahead and done it anyway and God is a gracious God Who can forgive the sin when it is confessed. However, there is a major promotion, even among Christians, that tries to convince you that getting a tattoo is a good thing to do. In fact, one church recently offered tattoos right at church. This is dark, it is evil and depraved. It is calling good, what God specifically says is bad.

**Woe Sin #5** - The sin of arrogant pride . **5:21**

One of the sins that truly is an abomination to God is arrogant pride. Whenever people get to the place where they think they are clever and wise in their own eyes, God hates it (Prov. 6:16-17). The arrogance was at such a level that Israel was saying we don't need God or His Word; we are wise in our own eyes. We know what we are doing. We don't need to submit to God's Word or God's will. It reminds me of our academic institutions that for the most part think they are so smart they don't need God or His Word for any help, knowledge or guidance.

In the recent troubles in Israel, I have yet to hear one Israeli leader say, we need to turn to God for help. I have yet to hear one leader suggest that this is a time when the nation needs to turn to God. The sin of arrogant pride still exists in Israel and it will take the final 3½ years of the Tribulation to level it.

**Woe Sin #6** - The sin of social injustice . **5:22-24**

The final “woe sin” was that His people had been drinking so much that they lost their sense of right and wrong and justice. Courts are supposed to be places that hand out just decisions. God originally intended that courts be the one place people could turn to get justice. But it wasn’t happening in Israel and it doesn’t much happen here either.

Again it is brought out that there was much drinking. One of the results of this was a distortion of justice. Drinking buddies would get together and bribe the right person, and the real innocent people who were actually in the right, who had a just case or cause, were not receiving any justice. When a nation or an individual loses its sense of right and wrong and loses its sense of justice, God will bring it down.

**PART #3** – God will cause a distant nation to come and punish Israel. **5:25-30**

Although it takes a long time to get God angry, once He is angry, it takes a very short time for Him to send His judgment. What is actually described in these verses has not completely been fulfilled yet. It is true that God whistled for the Babylonians and they came from afar and took demolished Jerusalem in 586 B.C., but some of the things described here have yet to occur.

There is coming a time when literally the “mountains will quake.” There is coming a time when corpses will lay in the streets as refuse. There is coming a time when terrible things will hit Israel. These things will happen in the Great Tribulation, especially the final 3½ years.

God will summon a European Antichrist to roar against Israel and devour her and lay her to total waste. That is the song that Isaiah sang. There are serious consequences for those not willing to honestly face and deal with sin.

The song says - you won’t deal with your sin, so I will deal with you. I will pull away My protection and My blessings and I will allow you to become a barren, useless nation. This is one sad depressing song for Israel and it is today for many too.

As we see these days approaching, be on guard against arrogance, greed and drunkenness. Check your conscience and make certain you do not call evil good and good evil. Pay attention to the work of the Lord. Stay faithful in assembling yourself together in the church to hear the Word of God. You put yourself on this path and you will be fruitful.