

**Subject: A Nation Under Judgment**

**Scripture: Isaiah 5:1-7**

Sir Winston Churchill was asked to give the qualifications for a person to succeed in politics and he said: "It is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, foretell what is going to happen next week, next month, and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen." God's prophets didn't have to explain their mistakes because they were right all the time. Isaiah is widely regarded as the prince of prophets because he had so many things to say about our Jesus. He also said some things about God's judgment on the nation of Israel.

Isaiah was not voted "Most Popular Preacher in Judah". He didn't read the book on "How to Win Friends and Influence People." He was not praised for his messages, but he stood up as God's prophet and said, "Thus saith the Lord." In effect he said, "Here's the way it is, and if something doesn't change, it's going to be over for our nation." Now nobody likes a gloom and doom preacher, but I want to tell you that, just like Israel then, America is now a nation under God's judgment.

**A SONG ABOUT THE NATION (vs. 1-7)**

Isaiah described God's judgment in a song. If the people wouldn't listen to his sermons, maybe they would listen to his song. The song told how God planted the nation like a vineyard. He gave the nation every blessing and opportunity. But when God expected to find good grapes in His vineyard, He could only find wild grapes. It's not hard to see the parallel in our nation. America shed His grace on us. He planted our nation and He has protected our nation, and He has every right to expect good fruit, but He sees wild fruit. He has every reason to be disappointed and disgusted, and take away His hand of blessing.

What happened to Israel? It is the same thing that has happened to us. Beginning in verse 8, Isaiah lays out the charges or indictments that God brings against the nation.

**THE SINS OF THE NATION (vs. 8-25)**

- **Greed and materialism (vs. 8-10)**

Real estate owners were making a profit at the expense of their fellow man. Vs. 8 "join house to house" means "they accumulated houses." Real estate owners put together vast estates, but God's plan was for land to be held by each family and remain in the same family from generation to generation. Their interpretation of the Golden Rule was: "He who has the gold makes the rules." Something like that has taken place in our nation. We are no longer "one nation under God," but we are "one nation under greed."

Isaiah warned that when judgment comes the fine houses would all be empty, and the fields would not produce their crops. (vs.10) Normally a large vineyard would produce many gallons of wine, but here the amount would be equal to six gallons. Imagine six bushels of seed producing only half a bushel of grain.

- **Drunkenness (vs.11-17)**

God warned about drinking and drunkenness. **Proverbs 20:1** *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*

I don't have to remind you that America is drinking herself to death. It's strange that the government condemns the use of drugs, yet they give special treatment to the alcohol industry. Alcohol is the worst kind of drug. Go into a grocery store and you'll find more wine and beer than milk and bottled water. Who's drinking all that? In a recent publication by BTES they praised one of our local businesses and even had a picture of the sixty kinds of home-brewed beer that it offers to customers. There's something wrong with that.

So many people will do anything and pay any price just to have a good time. And at the same time, they neglect God's work and His ways. The Bible says in the latter days, men will be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Isaiah warned that judgment is coming and the people who had such an appetite for pleasure will be brought down to hell. Hell is described as a monster that opens its mouth wide to devour its victims.

- **No respect for God (vs.18-19)**

Verse 18 describes people who are deeply involved in sin. The people kept right on sinning and they enjoyed every minute. "Cords of vanity" means "worthless or empty reasoning." People have any number of excuses and reasons for doing what they do. They hold to their sin, but in reality sin has a hold on them. They are bound by sin. They taunted Isaiah and other prophets, "Where is this judgment you keep talking about? Bring it on." "Holy One of Israel" (vs. 19) is used 25 times in Isaiah, but these sinners had no respect for God's holiness and felt no shame for their sin. They mocked God and thought they could get away with it.

- **Mixed-up morality (vs. 20)**

The people were confused about right and wrong and they came up with new definitions of morality. This was not accidental, but it was done on purpose. They tried to change their value system of right and wrong and change the terminology so they would feel comfortable with sin and ease their conscience. Just look at what has happened in America:

It's now wrong to kill endangered animals, but right to kill the unborn.

It's wrong to teach the Bible in schools, but right to teach evolution.

It's wrong to stand up for victims, but right to stand up for criminals.

It's wrong to put criminals to death, but right to put babies to death.

It's wrong to speak against same sex marriage, but right to be tolerant and stay quiet.

It's wrong to take a woman's right to choose, but right to take a baby's right to live.

A lot of people believe in law and order as long as they can lay down the law and give the orders. We have tried to redefine sin and call it by other names to make us feel better about it.

Instead of adultery, it is now sexual freedom.

Instead of homosexuality, it's now the gay lifestyle.

Instead of drunkenness, it's called substance abuse or an addiction.

Instead of murder, it's called abortion.

We have ways of making wrong sound right and right sound wrong. For example, when a child is born we call it a baby; but before it is born, we call it a fetus. The word "fetus" is actually a Latin word that means "offspring, baby." The important issues facing our nation are not just the economy and national security, but the great moral issues.

- **Arrogance and pride (vs. 21)**

**Proverbs 16:18** *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.* Why did God destroy Sodom? We know about the sexual perversion, but there was something more. **Ezekiel 16:49-50** *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*

Instead of listening to God, the people consulted with each other and made decisions based on their own wisdom. This is what it says in **Romans 1:22** *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* The Bible warns in **Proverbs 3:7** *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

- **Corrupt legal system (vs. 22-23)**

Isaiah describes the unjust sentences decided by drunken and bribed judges. The judges who were supposed to enforce the law used their authority to free the guilty and punish the innocent. **Proverbs 17:15** *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.* Much of what has gone bad in our nation can be traced to activist judges who try to legislate from the bench.

How does it violate the constitution to read the Bible and pray in school?  
How does it violate the constitution to display the Ten Commandments in a courthouse?  
How does the constitution give any mother the right to kill her unborn child?  
We have laws that protect endangered species of wildlife, and we have laws that allow doctors to kill human life. Something's wrong with that. **Psalms 94:20-21** <sup>20</sup> *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?* <sup>21</sup> *They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*

Just because something is legally right, doesn't make it morally right. **Proverbs 14:34** *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.* Vance Havner said, "At the rate America is going down morally, we will have to change our national symbol from an eagle to a vulture."

- **Despising God's Word (vs. 24-25)**

We hear a lot about gay rights and women's rights and worker's rights and patient's rights and legal rights, but what about God's rights? God has the right to punish sin and to judge a nation. That is exactly what Isaiah said would happen, and it did happen. What God did to Israel, He will do to our nation. God is our only hope, but He is also our biggest threat. If we don't humble ourselves and repent, then He will surely judge and punish us.

Someone reading these first chapters of Isaiah might ask, "What right does this prophet have to pronounce judgment on a nation? Isaiah 6 gives us the answer. Before Isaiah pronounced woe on the people, he first said "Woe is me for I am undone." Judgment must begin at the house of God and with the people of God. We have no right to call our nation to repent until we first repent.