

(Through the Bible) Isaiah 1-5

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on Isaiah 1-5 emphasizes God's call for genuine repentance and the futility of empty religious practices.

Duration: 1:23:35

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 2:3-4, Isaiah 41:21-23, Isaiah 46:9-10, Titus 2:13, Revelation 12:6

Topics: "Day Of Lord", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of a tabernacle as a place of refuge and protection from the elements. He then transitions to the topic of the day of the Lord, when God will once again rule and bless Israel and Jerusalem. The speaker uses the parable of a vineyard to illustrate God's relationship with Israel, emphasizing how God has cared for and nurtured them. However, he also warns of impending judgment and the consequences for the wicked. The sermon concludes with a message of hope in the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ and the promise of a new kingdom.

Transcript

Let's get into the book of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is a marvelous book of prophecy. Of course, it is the longest book of prophecy in the Bible.

And it would seem that God gave to Isaiah a clearer vision of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ than any other of the Old Testament prophets. He writes much concerning the Messiah that is to come. In the first verse, it tells us the historical time of his prophecies, beginning when Uzziah was king of Judah, which puts it about 760 B.C. And he lived through the succeeding reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and into Hezekiah's reign.

And there is some conjecture that he lived through Hezekiah's reign unto the reign of Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, who was an extremely wicked king. And there are some stories that Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, ordered Isaiah to be sawed in two. And that in the New Testament, the 11th chapter of Hebrews, where it tells us about the Old Testament heroes, it's interesting, the New Testament in Hebrews calls them men of faith, but some of the modern evangelists today would tell you they lacked faith, because it tells you how they suffered.

And it's amazing that the men of greatest faith were marked by their suffering. And it tells how they were imprisoned, how they were stoned, and it does say how they were sawn asunder, or sawed in two. And

there are those that believe that that is a reference to the fate of Isaiah under the king Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah.

But Isaiah names these kings through Hezekiah as the kings under which he served. In the Old Testament, if you go back to 2 Chronicles, beginning with chapter 26, and on through to chapter 32, you will get the historic background for Isaiah's prophecies. Because in 2 Chronicles, chapter 26 through 32, these kings, their reigns are listed.

And for special credit for the course, you'll go back and read 2 Chronicles 26 through 32 in order to best understand the prophecies of Isaiah as they fit in their historic setting. There is always a tremendous value in understanding the message of the prophet to read it in the contextual historic background, the things that were happening to the nation at the time that he was prophesying. It would appear that the first five chapters of Isaiah are during the reign of Uzziah.

Uzziah was a very popular king. In chapter 6, Isaiah records the death of Uzziah and the resultant effect that it had upon his own life. So the first five chapters are probably written during the time of the reign of Uzziah, who was a very popular king, a very prosperous king over Judah.

So it is the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which is not the same as the prophet Amos, different Greek or Hebrew word, that he saw concerning Judah, Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, the kings of Judah. Now it's as though man isn't listening anymore. It's as though Israel isn't giving heed to the word of the prophet.

So he calls unto the heavens and unto the earth to hear. Have you ever sat in a conversation and you're talking and you look up and no one's paying any attention to what you're saying? You know, they're in conversation and you discover that you've just been talking and no one's paying any attention. Quite often in a restaurant, you know, I'll be talking, then I'll look up and no one's paying any attention to what I say.

So I pick up the vase of flowers in the middle and I say, now as I was saying, I really think that, you know, and it's like people aren't listening anymore. So he says, hear, O heavens, give ear, O earth. Man isn't listening to the word of God.

So he's calling the heavens and the earth to bear witness to what the Lord hath spoken. And God gives here his indictment against the nation of Judah. Now, it is interesting that as you read it in its historic context, Uzziah was a fairly good king.

It would seem that under his reign, there was an outward revival among the people. They were going to temple. They were observing the Sabbath and under Uzziah's reign, they were also observing the feast days, the Passovers and all.

And though there was an outward form of religion, yet the Lord is calling out to the nation because underneath of it, God had this indictment against Judah at the time. I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. So God's first indictment is that his own children have rebelled against him.

It is interesting that God gives this figure of father and children to the nation of Judah at this time, even as we still see the same figure as we are children of God. But God said he has nourished these children, but they've rebelled against him. I've brought forth these children, I've nourished them, and now they're rebelling against me.

They've become worse than animals. For the ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib. But Israel does not know.

My people does not consider. In other words, at least an animal has enough innate sense. An ox, can we say a dumb ox, but an ox has enough sense to know his owner.

A donkey has enough sense to know his master's crib. A few years ago in Jerusalem, a crime was committed and the criminal in escaping left his donkey at the scene of the crime. And the detective who happened to know a little bit of scripture, who was examining the case, came and said, well, just turn the donkey loose.

And he followed him and led him to his master's crib. And the man was apprehended. Donkey has enough sense to know his master's crib.

But God said, but Israel doesn't know. My people do not consider. They have not taken God into consideration that God has been providing for them.

They don't know me, God is complaining. As I said this morning, how long would you keep a dog if it would attack you viciously every time you went in your backyard? He didn't know his owner. He didn't know who was buying the dog food.

You'd have to throw his food out the window. Where every time you'd go out in the backyard, he'd come attacking you viciously, biting at you. But yet if strangers or a burglar would come into the yard, he'd go up wagging his tail and greeting him.

How long do you think you'd keep a dog like that? Well, I'll tell you, I'd get rid of a dog like that in a hurry. Think how patient God has been with some of you. Think of how long suffering God is.

Even an animal has enough sense to know his owner, to know his master's crib, to know where his provisions are coming from. But God says, my people haven't considered. Israel doesn't know me.

The third indictment that God has against them is that they've become a sinful nation, a people who are loaded down with iniquity. They are a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord.

They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger. And they have gone away backwards or they have backslidden. They've gone away backwards from God.

They're not going forward toward God, going backward from God. What a heavy indictment God lays upon them here. And then God questions, why should you be stricken anymore? Now, they had already been suffering.

The condition of the nation was vastly deteriorating, weakening. Their enemies had been coming in. They had lost a vast amount of their treasure.

They had lost a vast amount of their cities. They were in a period of decline. And God said, why should you receive any more stripes? Why should you be stricken anymore? Why is it that you revolt still or more and more? For the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint.

And from the sole of the foot to the top of the head, there is no soundness in it, but there are wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Here's a nation battered, bruised, bleeding, because they have turned their backs on God.

And God has allowed the judgment, the chastisement to come to his children. But still, they're not learning the lesson. Still, they're not turning to God.

Why should you be stricken still? Why should it have to go on? And the whole idea is turn to God. Now, I've always said that, you know, you can make it easy on yourself or make it hard on yourself. And some people just make it hard on themselves.

In a few chapters, we are going to read, woe unto those who strive with their Maker. Whenever you strive with God, you're making it hard on yourself. You're going to hurt.

You're going to come out the loser. Why should you be stricken anymore? God said. Covered with bruises.

Now, God turns and he speaks of the desolation of the land. Deals, first of all, with the people as a result of their sin, the land has been ravaged. Your country is desolate.

Your cities are burned with fire. Now, this is equivalent to the wounds and the bruises and putrefying sores. He's just talking about how the nation has been ravaged.

Your land, the strangers devoured in your presence. It is desolate. It's overthrown by strangers.

The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in the vineyard, as a lodge in the garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city become isolated and just alone like a city that's under siege. Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been a Sodom and we would have been likened to Gomorrah. Unless God had spared the small remnant that was left, they would have been totally wiped out, as was Sodom and Gomorrah.

They would have been devastated. Here's the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom. Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

So, God here is, he brings up the reference of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction by God's judgment. And now he speaks of Jerusalem as a present Sodom and Gomorrah as we in a figurative sense would speak of San Francisco as a modern Sodom and Gomorrah. For the same openness of the same sin, the prating and the flouting of that sin that brought the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is being flouted in San Francisco.

So, God then makes the talks about Jerusalem as being Sodom and Gomorrah. In Revelation, John picks up the same figure and uses which is spiritually Sodom, he said, concerning Jerusalem where the bodies of the prophets are slain. To what purpose, God said, is the multitude of your sacrifice.

Now he gets into the religious aspects of their life. And getting into the religious aspects, God shows that the outward form of religion is without value. God isn't interested in religious forms.

God is interested in your heart. The attitude of your heart is far more important to God than the actions. There are many people who are going through the right actions, but have the wrong attitudes.

And that's a sad condition. God is interested in the attitude of your heart. Of course, this is certainly manifested in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus speaks of the importance of attitude.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I'm full of burnt offerings of rams, the fat of fed beasts. I delight not in the blood of bullocks or in lambs or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who's required this at your hand to tread in my courts? I didn't ask you to come, God says.

Who invited you into my courts? They were coming. They were still going through the religious exercises. They were still observing the Sabbaths and the new moons and the feast days.

But God said, Hey, I'm full up with your sacrifice. That's not what I want. David said, Sacrifice an offering thou wouldst not, else I would give it, but a contrite heart, O Lord, that you will not turn away.

This after his sin with Bathsheba and his 51st Psalm prayer of forgiveness. Sacrifices and offerings, Lord, you're not really interested in, but the contrite, broken and contrite heart, Lord, you're not going to turn away. God is interested in the broken and contrite heart much more than you're bringing some sacrifice to Him.

We look at the evil of the church and the church history that gave the impression to man that he could buy the forgiveness of his sins. And it's all right, just as long as you make a healthy contribution. You know, we'll patch on the back and say, fine fellow, sit down here in the front row, you know.

You've got your name with a gold star or on the window crystal. You've got your name over here, you know. You've donated.

You're in good standing. It's been the curse of the church to make men feel comfortable thinking that because of their contributions and all, that they're well accepted and God has an open door policy. Now, God's interested in the heart.

God said, hey, I've had it up to here with sacrifice. I didn't ask you to come in. Who invited you into my courts? Who required you to come along? Don't bring me any more of these vain oblations.

Your incense is an abomination unto me. And the new moons and the Sabbath and the calling of the assemblies, I cannot away with it. It's iniquity even in your solemn meetings, even in your sacred services.

They're just filled with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hates. They are a trouble I'm weary to bear them.

Oh, how God is just so sick of the religious forms if your heart isn't in it. And when you spread forth your hand I will hide my eyes from you. Yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood.

The president of the Southern Baptist Association got into a lot of trouble recently for a careless statement that he made concerning whose prayers God hears. But here God Himself declares that there are certain prayers that He's not going to listen to. People who are spreading forth their hands towards God.

But God said, Hey, I'm not going to hear. Why? Because your hands are full of blood. God does answer prayer.

That's the basic thrust of prayer. That's why we continue to pray and that's our encouragement for prayer. But it is true that there are prayers that God doesn't hear.

David said, Have I regard iniquity in my heart that the Lord does not hear me when I pray? In the 59th chapter of Isaiah it says, God's hand is not short that He cannot save. Neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. But your sins have separated between you and God.

Here God is saying, When you stretch forth your hands, that is to pray, and you offer your prayers, I'm not going to hear them. For your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves.

Make yourself clean. Put away the evil doings from before my eyes and cease doing evil. Learn to do well.

Seek judgment. Relieve the oppressed. Judge the fatherless and plead for the widow.

So the things that God was really concerned about is that they would really seek an honest judgment. That they would relieve the oppressed people. That they would give a true judgment to the fatherless and to the widow.

And after this indictment against them for their sins, declaring the desolation that has come to their nation as the result of it, and of God's total abhorrence to their formal religious exercises without any heart behind it, He calls for them really to repent, to cease doing their evil, learn to do well, learn to do the things that God wants. It is interesting that God didn't want the sacrifices. God didn't want the offerings or whatever that were being brought to Him.

He wanted them to start living right, to deliver the oppressed. So God said, Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. So, God never challenges a person to take a leap of blind faith.

The concept and idea of blind faith has been invented by those outside the church. It is not a scriptural term, nor is it something God has challenged any man to do. It is something that man is being challenged to do by the existential philosophers today.

For the philosophy of existentialism has concluded that truth, good, evil do not exist on a universal base. That they only exist in the experience of an individual. And because we are all different, we must all then experience for ourselves what is good.

And that if you live in reality, real honesty or reality is hopeless and despairing. And their net result of their search for truth has led them to hopelessness and despair. It doesn't exist.

It is only relative as it relates to you. Therefore, because we as human beings cannot exist in hopelessness and despair, we must take our leap of faith, blind faith, hoping that we might find something to sustain us when we land. No guarantees, but you've got to experience, you've got to take your leap of faith.

And they start talking about the ultimate experience. The search for that ultimate experience. Take your leap of faith.

Maybe you can discover it. One of the professors in Germany had so many students commit suicide that were taking his course, started interjecting into his lessons, we don't know that suicide is the ultimate experience. Now it may be, but we're not sure of that.

Of course, Huxley thought that the ultimate experience would be to die on a wild LSD trip. So as he was dying, he took a large dose of LSD. He thought that was the ultimate experience.

It probably was. Hopelessness and despair, but you can't live in that. So you've got to take a leap of faith into a non-reasoned religious experience.

Now that is why the Eastern religions, the mystics, the cultists and so forth, our occultists are so popular today. That's why some little guru with a high, whiny voice can say, ah, flowers are lovely and all this, you know. And everybody starts contemplating their navels and start chanting their owns.

Because somehow, as they get into this transcendental meditation, they get into an altered conscious state that they cannot explain, but they have a sense of well-being and a sense of peace and tranquility. Can't give you any reason for it. It's just that I feel in oneness with the great creative force of the universe or something, you know.

And that's why you see these kids with their shaved heads and finger symbols and their white robes and they're dancing and chanting because they are discovering some kind of a feeling that they cannot explain. It's a non-reasoned religious experience, a state of altered consciousness. And that's what philosophy says we must experience.

You've got to experience it for yourself. And thus, you might discover what to you is relevant or meaningful or true. But God doesn't say take a leap of blind faith.

God says, hey, come, let's reason together. God wants you to be reasonable. Let us reason together, saith the Lord.

Not a non-reasoned religious experience. God will give you a reason and a base for your peace. God gives you a reason why you're upset.

A reason why there is the inner turmoil. A reason why there is that emptiness within. And God will give you a reason for believing and trusting.

One of the areas where we have strong evidence that God wrote the book and that God knew what He was talking about is in the area of prophecy. God challenged the false gods in Isaiah 41 to bring forth their strong reasons by telling us something before it happens. So that after it happens, we really know you're a God.

Show us a sign, a miracle, a wonder in heaven or on the earth that we might wonder at it and know that you are God. Prove yourself. Give some evidence.

Don't demand that we blindly follow you. Give some evidence. That you might know He said that I am God.

I'm going to tell you things before they ever transpire. Jesus said to His disciples, Now I've told you these things before they come to pass so that when they come to pass, you might believe. It's to give you a basis for your faith.

Not blind faith. To give you a reason to believe. So I tell you in advance the things that are going to take place so that after these things take place, you will believe.

A reason for it. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. And then God makes a challenging offer to these rebellious children who have sunk lower than the animals, who are covered with bruises, whose hands are filled with blood.

He said, Though your sins be as scarlet. The word scarlet has as a background double-dyed. Soaked in the dye so long.

Dried and soaked again until the dye has permeated the very fibers of the fabric. And it is impossible to remove. Some people are so steeped in sin that it has penetrated the very fibers of their being and sin has become second nature to them.

You by nature are a sinner, but when it becomes second nature, you're in big trouble. I mean, that's a rank sinner. Second nature.

You do it without thinking. It's just second nature to you. But even though your sins be double-dyed, even though your sins have permeated the very fiber of your being, though they be as scarlet, they may be as white as snow.

Though they be red as crimson, they may be as wool. Again, very white. What a marvelous offer by God to sinning man.

And this, of course, is the offer of grace. It's you can't do it yourself. You can't bring it about by sacrifice, by offerings.

God's sick of those. You can only do it by receiving the grace of God. Come now, let us reason together.

Though you are in this terrible, hopeless state, I'll wash you, I'll cleanse you, I'll make you over again. If you be willing, that's the key. If you are willing.

It has to be your choice. God is not going to force His will upon any man. For God has created you with the capacity of choice, and that would be totally meaningless unless He respected the choices that you made.

So if you are willing and obedient, God said, you can eat of the good of the land. The land that is wasted and desolate and taken over by your... You can eat of it again, the good of it again. But if you refuse and you rebel, then you will be devoured with a sword.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. That's it. You've got your choice.

Come, let's reason together. If you're willing, if you'll be obedient, you can have the best. If you continue to rebel, you're going to get cut off.

Now, hey, with those kind of terms, it would be reasonable to accept God's offer of grace and forgiveness. That would be the only reasonable thing under those terms. It would be very unreasonable to continue in your rebellion at that rate, to be cut off.

And so God speaks of Jerusalem. How has the faithful city become as a harlot? Speaking, of course, in spiritual terms, the city that God had chosen, the city that God had selected from all of the cities of the earth to place His name there, that the people might come to it to worship Him. And yet, they had established within the city the various groves and high places in the worship of the false gods of Mammon and Molech and Baal.

It is interesting, some recent archaeological excavations that have been done above the springs of Gihon, going up from the Pool of Siloam in the spring of Gihon, just above the two, and heading on up towards the Temple Mount. Recent archaeological excavations have uncovered the ruins of the ancient city of Jerusalem. Some of the houses that were there in Isaiah's day and on up to the fall of Jerusalem, they have found the ruins of the houses that were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar when he did come in and level the city.

And there are marvelous, interesting artifacts that they have discovered in these houses that were torn down and broken down by Nebuchadnezzar's army. And within the houses, they have found multitudes of little idols that were given to the various gods, the pagan gods, confirming what the prophets were saying to the nation of Judah as they were warning of the impending destruction. Even as Isaiah said here, the faithful city has become a harlot because they've turned from the love of God, the true God, the living God.

And as Jeremiah said, you have forsaken the fountain of living waters and you've hewn out cisterns that can't hold water. And so they're turning to these idols and to these other gods. They've turned, as God would say spiritually, unto harlotry.

They've become a harlot. The city is full of judgment, righteousness once lodged in it, but now murderers. Thy silver has become dross.

Thy wine is mixed with water. Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Bribery was rampant.

Everyone loves gifts and they follow after rewards and thus their judgment is perverted. They do not really judge the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come to them because they are receiving bribes. A total breakdown of the judicial system.

Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries and avenge me of my enemies. And what a tragic thing when the people of God have become His enemy. I will turn my hand upon thee.

I will purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin. I will restore thy judges as at the first and thy counselors as at the beginning. And afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Now, of course, we got to about as dark as you can get. God had painted a black, black background for the nation of Judah, the city of Jerusalem. Get your blackest paint.

Paint the background using nothing but black. Slate black. And now God takes, and in this black background, He begins to bring a shaft of light, a shaft of hope for the future.

For God is going to cleanse their dross and He will restore their judges as at the first and your counselors as at the beginning. And afterwards, after the restoration, thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Now she's a harlot.

She's turned from God, but she shall become once again faithful unto her husband. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together.

And they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed, for they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen. The oaks and the gardens were a couple of the different cultish religions that they had embraced there in Jerusalem. They are referred to by other prophets also.

Worshiping under the trees and planting these gardens and using them for a form of worship of other gods. The strong shall be as a toe and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together and none shall quench them. So, God will wipe out the iniquity.

He'll destroy those who are guilty of iniquity. And the strong will be as a toe, which is sort of a, the Hebrew word is to be cast off as a flax, the residue that is cast off actually. So, it is a broken rope or a strand that is broken and the maker as a spark and burning it, destroying it.

Now, chapter two is introduced. Again, the word that Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And now God takes him out to the future and it shall come to pass in the last days or in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it.

So, Isaiah goes from the dark, bleak history and now he jumps forward to a day yet future when Jesus Christ, the Messiah, comes and establishes the kingdom and the Jews, as the Scripture said, will look upon Him whom they have pierced. And they will recognize Him and they will weep over Him, weep over their national blindness and their failure to recognize that He was their Messiah. And He will establish His kingdom there on the top of the mountains in Jerusalem.

Traditionally, it is felt that the top of Mount Zion will be the place of the throne of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom Age. And this is going ahead now to the Kingdom Age. All nations shall flow unto it and many people shall go and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob and He shall teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths.

For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. So, the Bible tells us in other passages that the kings of the earth will come to Jerusalem to offer their gifts unto the Lord and to just have celebrations there. Now, who are the kings of the earth that are referred to here? Well, you're looking at King Charles.

In Revelation chapter 1, as he speaks of Jesus Christ, he said, unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us and hath made us unto our God kings and priests. And we shall reign with Him on the earth. To the church, he said, he that overcometh will I grant that he shall sit with me on the throne of my kingdom, even as I have sat down at the throne of my father's kingdom.

And they shall rule over the earth with a rod of iron. And then in Revelation chapter 5, as the Lamb takes the scroll out of the right hand of Him who is sitting upon the throne, when the prayers of the saints are offered before the throne of God, the golden vials full of orders, which are the prayers of the saints. They sang a new song saying, worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals, for He was slain and He has redeemed us by His blood out of all of the nations, tribes, tongues, and people and hath made us unto our God kings and priests.

And we shall reign with Him upon the earth. So, actually it's talking about you. When it says, come, let's go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways.

And we will walk in His paths. Won't it be exciting to go to Jerusalem and just sit down and let Jesus teach us for a while? You know, that sounds so exciting to me. And that's just thrilling to me, the concept and the whole idea and all to realize that we'll be having annual trips to Jerusalem just to sit there and to listen to the Lord expound the love and the grace and the goodness of God unto us.

The law of the Lord. He will teach us of His ways. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Looking forward to that glorious day when Jesus is reigning and the military budgets are used for agricultural development, beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Last year, over one trillion dollars were spent throughout the world forging swords and spears, weapons of war. Military budgets of the world totaled over a trillion dollars last year. And this year, we're expanding our military budget.

There are many who are warning that war is imminent. I have a personal friend who is a high-ranking officer who has kept in touch with me. He's back in the Pentagon right now going through briefings.

And he said, Chuck, we've never been closer to war. We've never been closer to war He said, we're on the verge. And he said, everybody is scared.

But a day is coming when no one is going to have to fear war any more. You're not going to have to fear mass destruction. You're not going to have to fear the exotic poison gases, neutron hydrogen bombs.

They'll study war no more. The war colleges will all be closed and the Lord will reign. Now, God, this is the blessing that's going to come.

But before the blessing can come, there's going to be some rough times. Therefore, thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east. And soothsayers are like the Philistines and they please themselves and the children of strangers.

Their land also is full of silver and gold. Neither is there in the end of their treasures. Their land also is full of horses, neither in the end of their chariots.

Their land also is full of idols and they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. So the idea of man worshiping and serving the creature more than the creator is brought up here. Men worshiping the works of their own hands more than the creator.

What an apt description of humanism and really the materialism of the present day where man has placed his value upon the material objects, the work of his own hands rather than upon the Lord. God speaks at this time. And the mean man bows down and the great man humbles himself.

Therefore, forgive them not. Enter into the rock. Hide thee in the dust for fear of the Lord, for the glory of His majesty.

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon everyone that is proud

and lofty and everyone that is lifted up and he shall be brought low. Now, this could very well be referring to the time after the exodus of the church.

For when the church makes its exodus out of the world, it's going to be a time of great world prosperity for a time. At the beginning of the reign of the man of sin, people are going to be singing happy days are here again because this man is going to come in with a program of peace and of economic prosperity. And they will move in to take the wealth of the church that has departed.

Now, they're going to have this 20 acres and these buildings, my house, my car. They can have it all, you know. And suddenly you're going to have all of this extra thrown in to the whole economy.

And you won't have the housing shortage in Orange County. There'll be a lot of empty houses for people to move into. People can grab a second car and they're going to really get into a real materialistic kick because of all of these things that have been left.

But then, after three and a half years, then God is going to bring down the proud. God is going to begin to smite the earth. The day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty and upon everyone that is lifted up and they will be brought low.

Upon all the cedars of Lebanon and those that are high and lifted up and upon the oaks of Bashan, upon all the high mountains, upon the hills that are lifted up and upon every high tower, upon every fenced wall, upon all the ships of Tarshish, upon the pleasant pictures. The loftiness of man shall be bowed down. The haughtiness of men shall be made low and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day and the idols he shall utterly abolish and they shall go into the holes and the rocks and into the caves of the earth for fear of the Lord.

Remember in Revelation in the sixth seal, it said, and they cried into the rocks and mountains, fall on us and hide us from the face of the Lamb for the day of his wrath has come and who shall be able to stand going into the holes and the rocks, the caves of the earth for the fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty when he arises to shake terribly the earth. God said, once more I'm going to shake this earth until everything that can be shaken shall be shaken until only that which cannot be shaken shall remain. And all of these lofty works of men, man I wouldn't want to be downtown Los Angeles when this shaking takes place.

All of these lofty works of men brought low. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver and idols of gold which they have made each one for himself to worship to the moles and to the bats and they'll go into the class of the rocks to the tops of the ragged rocks for the fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty when he arises to shake terribly the earth. You read how that in Athens and in Italy there after the earthquakes the people were living outside they were afraid to go back in the houses because of the shaking and all.

The same experience only on a worldwide basis where people will be afraid to move back in the houses and they'll get a cave or something to live in for a while for fear of the shaking that has taken place as God once more shakes the earth terribly. See she from man whose breath is in his nostrils. In other words, don't trust in man.

He has to breathe just like you do. Better to trust in God. Put your confidence in him.

For wherein is man to be accounted of? For behold, the Lord of hosts does take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay in the staff and the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water, the mighty men and the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent, the ancient, the captain of 50, the honorable man and the counselor, the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them. And so God is speaking now.

It would seem of a more of a near local kind of a situation rather than the long term that he had spoken of in chapter two. The people shall be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor. The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient and the base against the honorable.

When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, thou as clothing, be thou our ruler and let this ruin be in our, be under thy hand. And in that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be a healer for in my house is neither bread nor clothing. Make me not a ruler over the people for Jerusalem is ruined.

Judah is fallen because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord to provoke the eyes of his glory. The show of their countenance the witness against them and they declare their sin as Sodom and hide it not. They have the same kind of open, flagrant demonstration of their sin as did Sodom.

They don't seek to hide it, but they become very brazen in their desire for recognition. Woe to their soul, for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Now say to the righteous, now is to comfort the righteous in the midst of all of the devastation that is to come.

Say to the righteous that it shall be well with him. It's going to be well with you. When God shakes the earth, it's going to be well with you.

For they shall eat of the fruit of their own labors. But woe unto the wicked, it will be ill with him. For the rewards of his own hands will be given to him.

As for my people, children are their oppressors. Women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths.

God's talking about the corrupted government at that time. It sounds sort of familiar. The Lord stands up to plead and stands to judge the people.

The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people and the princes thereof. For ye have eaten up the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that you beat my people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord God of hosts.

Moreover, the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty and they walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and make a tinkling with their feet. Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day, the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet and the calls and the round tires like the moon, the chains and the bracelets, the mufflers, the bonnets, the ornaments of the legs and the headbands and the tablets and the earrings and the rings and the nose jewels and the changeable suits of apparel and all of the mantles and the wimples and the cringing pins, the glasses, the fine linen, the hoods, and it shall come to pass that instead of a sweet smell, there shall be a stink, instead of a girdle, a tear, and instead of a well-set hair, baldness, instead of the stomacher, a girding of sackcloth and burning instead of beauty.

And thy men shall fall by the sword and thy mighty in the war and her gate shall lament and mourn and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground." And here God is describing the judgment that is to come upon Judah and Jerusalem for their iniquity. Speaking of the proudness and of the material aspects of their lifestyles but how things were going to be changed because they didn't take God into consideration in their lives. How Judah and Jerusalem were destroyed and ravaged by Babylon.

Now the Lord looks on, I mean, Isaiah looks on through the Lord to the future in that day seven women shall take hold of one man saying we will eat our own bread, we'll wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name to take away our reproach. It was a reproach to a woman in those days, of course, not to bear a child but there will be a shortage of men. So seven women will take hold of one man and say, hey, we'll take care of ourselves, we'll provide our own food and everything else but we want you to take away our reproach and give your name really to our child.

But in that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful. The branch of the Lord, of course, is one of the terms by which Christ is described. The branch of Jehovah is called actually the branch of David and Jehovah's servant, the branch in Zechariah and the term branch is used many times in reference to Jesus Christ.

In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel and it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy. Even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and a shining and a flaming fire by night for upon all of the glory shall be a defense.

And there shall be a tabernacle for the shadow in the daytime from the heat and for a place of refuge and for a covert from the storm and from the rain. So going ahead again from the darkness of the impending judgment and the long period of time in which the Gentiles shall rule to the day of the Lord when he shall once again rule and Israel and Jerusalem shall be blessed in the center of God's righteous reign upon the earth. Now in the fifth chapter, the Lord takes up a parable of a vineyard in which he likens Judah or Israel, the nation, his people unto a vineyard.

Now I'm going to sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath the vineyard in a very fruitful hill. He fenced it.

He gathered the stones out of it. And you that have been over know what a job that is to gather the stones out of the vineyard. And you see how they gather the stones and make walls with the stones and terraces with the stones.

There are the vineyard and you that have been there get a good mental picture of that. And he planted it with a choicest vine. He built a tower in the midst of it.

Some of these watching towers you'll still discover over there as you go through the land. They have these towers where during the summer season, the people move out of the cities and onto the plots of ground that they own in the country. And on these plots of grounds, they have these towers.

And in these towers are the living quarters for the family. And while they are taking care of the crops and harvesting during the summer and autumn period, they live in these towers out in the midst of the fields. And the towers, of course, also serve as watchtowers where they could watch over their land from people who would come and try to steal the fruit of the land.

So he built a tower in the midst of it. And also he made a winepress therein. And he looked at it.

It should bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now all inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah judge. I pray you between me and my vineyard.

Now you determine. You make the judgment. What could have been done more to my vineyard than I have not done in it? In other words, God said, what more could I have done for the people? I brought them into the land.

I established them there. They built and established their cities. They planted it.

And I did everything for them. What more could have I done for them that I haven't already done? Judge. Wherefore, or why is it that when I looked and it should have brought forth grapes that it brought forth wild grapes? Now go.

I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up. I'm going to break down the wall thereof and it will be trodden down.

And I will lay it waste and it shall not be pruned nor digged. And there shall come upon it briars and thorns that will also command the clouds that they 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, there was oppression. He looked for righteousness, but there was a cry from those who were being oppressed. God was looking for fruit from his vineyard.

Now Jesus said, I am the true vine. My father is the husbandman. And every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, he purges or cleanses it that it might bring forth more fruit.

Again, over there in the land, you will notice as you go through the area of Eshkol where they grow some of the most delicious grapes in the world. Man, they're great. You'll go over there in October.

It's just fabulous. But you'll notice these grape vines in Eshkol grow on the ground. Big old main branches that are along the ground and they prop them up with rocks.

Now they do have some of the grape vines on trellises, but through the valley of Eshkol, most of these luscious grapes actually grow right on the ground. And you'll see these big old vines just growing on the ground and propped with rocks. And when the grapes come out on the vines, they actually lay right on the ground.

So as the grapes are developing, they will go through the vineyard and they will take these grapes that are there on the ground and they will pick them up and they will wash them, get the dirt and all off of them as they're developing. And then we'll usually prop them on a rock or something in order that it might bring forth better fruit. If they just lie on the ground, then the little bugs and all start eating them and all.

So they prop up the grapes after they've washed them in order that they might bring forth better fruit, more fruit. And so Jesus is making reference to this. Now, my father is the husband and I'm the true vine and you're the branches.

And every branch in me that is bringing forth fruit, he cleanses it, that it might bring, he washes it, that it might bring forth more fruit. Now he said, you are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. The washing of the word in my life, the cleansing.

Now, what is the purpose of the word? In order that I might bring forth more fruit for God. What is God interested in my life? Fruit. What was he interested in? The nation Israel, that they would bring forth fruit.

Why did he do so much for them? So they would bring forth fruit. Why is God doing so much for us that we might bring forth fruit unto him? And herein is the father glorified that you bear much fruit. That's what God desires from your life, that you bring forth much fruit.

So the Lord comes to his garden and he's looking for fruit. Now it is interesting that in the same context in which Jesus takes now the vine and makes the application to the church, he then speaks of the commandment, a new commandment that I given to you that you love one another. And he relates this loving with the fruit that God was looking for.

And so it is significant that Paul tells us in Galatians, now the fruit of the Spirit is love. Now this is really what God is looking for because out of love proceeds true judgment, fairness. If you really love, you're not going to be oppressing someone.

So where in the Old Testament it was, you know, let's have righteous judgment, let's not oppress the poor and these kind of things. In the New Testament, it is put in a positive sense. Hey, let's love one another as we love ourselves.

For if we love each other as we love ourselves, we're not going to be taking advantage of each other. We're not going to be oppressing each other, but we're going to be helping one another. We're going to be lifting up the one that has fallen.

We're going to be giving aid to those that are down. We're going to be concerned with the needs of others. And that's exactly what God is.

That's the kind of fruit that God is looking for for in our lives and in the church today that we really have a genuine love and concern for each other where we are giving to one another those that are in need for when one member suffers, they all suffer. We all step in to help the one that is hurting, that is down. And that beautiful love within the body where we begin to bear one another's burdens and thus we fulfill the law of Jesus Christ.

And that's the kind of fruit that God wants from our lives. Now, the opposite to this is selfishness. And that is one of the biggest problems that we have to deal with is our own self-centeredness and our own selfishness where we're wanting everything for ourselves.

And we will give as long as it doesn't take away from me, as long as it doesn't hurt me. But God wants the fruit of love to come forth from his vineyard. And so God comes to his garden to collect its fruit.

And if he finds nothing but wild grapes, he'll forsake the garden. He said, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to break down the hedge.

I'm just going to forsake it. I'm going to let it go. If it's going to bear wild grapes, it doesn't need me.

I'm just going to forsake the garden. Now God pronounces his woes upon Israel. There are six of them.

One to them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place that may be they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth. Sounds like Orange County with all of our subdivisions and condominiums and townhouses joining house to house, lay field to field, till there's no room left. In my ears saith the Lord of hosts of a truth, many houses shall be desolate.

Even great and fair houses will be without inhabitants. And the land will no longer produce. The land will be worn out.

Ten acres of a vineyard will only yield eight gallons of fruit. And 86 gallons, a homer, of the seeds will only yield about a bushel. So real famine conditions.

Woe unto them, second woe, that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink that continue tonight. The description of the alcoholic really. Until the wine inflames them.

When you really get to the real alcoholism is when you start drinking the moment you get up in the morning. Take the first drink. Get your day started.

Well, that's the sign. That's a sign of real alcoholism. When you get to that point, you are a full-fledged alcoholic.

You need to get the day started with a drink. Woe unto them until the wine inflames them and the harp and the vial and the tablet and the pipe and the wine are in their feast, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. People are just looking for entertainment and pleasure, but they don't really give God a consideration in their life.

Therefore, because of this, because people have become pleasure-mad, have not regarded God in their lives, God has given them over to captivity because they have no knowledge and their honorable men are famished and the multitude is dried up with thirst. Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure and their glory and their multitude and their pomp and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought down and the mighty man shall be humbled and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled, but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

And then shall the lambs feed after their manor and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. The next woe, woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of emptiness and sin as it were with a cart rope. So much sin that it takes a cart rope, a huge rope to draw it.

That say, let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come that we may know it. They begin to challenge God and challenge the judgment of God. If it's so that God do something that we might see it, you know if he's really there.

The next woe, woe unto them that call evil good and good evil. They call those who believe in creation misfits and fools that put darkness for light and light for darkness that put bitter for sweet and sweet for

bitter. Now, of course, we are living, I feel, in an age in which we are really calling evil good and good evil.

Men who try to stand up for something that is decent and moral are made to look like fools in the paper. If people who are interested in decency and morality get together and decide to do something about child prostitution, child pornography, and some of these other things, then the papers begin to, you know, say, oh, you know, a threat of Nazism or something, you know, here they're wanting to rule and they have pictures of Khomeini and, you know, they make them look like a bunch of half-witted idiots, you know, that are trying to force moral standards, their own moral standards upon everyone. All we're saying is, hey, we'd like to have a decent place to live.

We don't want our children to be exposed to the Playboy cover girls when they have to go to the store to buy a quart of milk. We don't want them to have to deal with the wicked, vile imaginations of perverted men when we send them out to the playgrounds. We want some laws that will really deal with these perverted men who want to display themselves and shock these precious little daughters of ours who are eight and nine years old.

We feel that the sickos ought to be put away and should not be a threat to our children. And so, we're made to look like a bunch of fools and prudes and idiots. Yet, the gay community gets together and they have a large banquet in Los Angeles to raise funds in order to lobby for certain legislation that will bring a liberalization for their activities.

And Governor Brown comes and speaks and the papers herald it as a glorious event, a step of progress for these people. And you don't find a lot of overtones and threats in the papers and, you know, of, oh, evil is going to take place because, you know, the gays have had this big fundraising dinner and they're going to be able to now have money to lobby against legislation that would restrict and restrain their activities to their own kind. But this is heralded, you know, in the papers, a marvelous thing.

Woe unto those who call good evil and evil good. The editors of our liberal press today. Boy, it's right there.

I could go on, but I won't. It's easy to climb on your little box and really wail. Woe unto those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight.

Men who do not look at themselves in the light of God. Men who do not judge themselves by God's standards, but by their own standard. The sixth woe and the last.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink, which justify the wicked for a reward and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. God is talking here about the legislators and the judges. And it is interesting that the highest alcoholic consumption in the United States is in Washington, D.C. The highest consumption per capita is in Washington, D.C. I think that's tragic.

All of the lobbying which justify the wicked for a reward take away the righteousness and the righteous of the righteous from him. A lot of these edicts that are coming from these boozed legislators and judges and all. It's tragic.

You don't have to go to Washington to find it. You can find it right here in your own local community. You know, it might be a good idea that you examine some of the judges that are sitting on the bench.

Now, I don't blame them for being on the bench. I don't blame them for becoming alcoholics. I wouldn't want to be a judge.

I wouldn't want to have on my conscience the things that they must have on theirs. And you got to do something to live with yourself and sleep at night. So, I don't blame them for becoming alcoholics.

If I were a Christian, I'd probably be an alcoholic too. How else are you going to cope with this stupid world? But woe unto them. Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore, is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people and he hath stretched forth his hand against them and has smitten them and the hills did tremble and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all of this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. God has brought his judgment, but he's not through yet.

For he will lift up and ensign to the nations from far and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth and behold, they shall come with speed swiftly. None shall be weary nor stumble among them. None shall slumber or sleep.

Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loose nor the latchet of their shoes be broken. Whose arrows are sharp and whose bows are bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint and the wheels like a whirlwind. Their roaring shall be like a lion and they shall roar like a young lion.

Yea, they shall roar and lay hold of the prey and carry it away safe and none shall be able to deliver it. And so, Judah, Jerusalem was carried away captive unto Babylon. And in that day, they shall roar against them like a roaring of the sea.

And if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and sorrow and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof. So, the opening of Isaiah, the opening judgments of God that are proclaimed, plus always the glorious light at the end of the tunnel when God has finished with His judgment, the glorious kingdom that is coming. And so, we will continue next week some fabulous prophecies as we get into chapter 6 through 10.

We begin to see the glorious light of the coming Messiah as He begins to make the predictions of that one that God is going to send who will establish a righteous kingdom and bring forth righteous judgment upon the earth. Shall we stand? The Bible study tonight can have one of two effects upon you and it all depends on what you are. Blessings unto the righteous.

You'll eat of the fruit of the land. Woe unto the wicked. You think it's bad now? It's going to get worse.

But what a hope we have, a blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ who when He comes, He's going to change our vile bodies that they might be fashioned just like His own glorious image. And as we get to the 26th chapter, we find the glorious promise of the Lord taking away His people and hiding them while this time of His indignation and wrath is poured out upon the earth for a little season until the judgments are through and then the unfolding of the glory of His new kingdom. Of which you may all have a part.

It's up to you. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Why should He have to lay more stripes upon you? What's it going to take to turn you around? What's it going to take to awaken you to God's love and that which God wants to do for you if you'll just give Him the chance? Though your sins be as scarlet, they may be as white as snow.

God is willing tonight to wash you and to cleanse you from every sin, from all iniquity. He's willing to make you over a new person. He's willing.

But that's not enough. You must be willing too. If you are, I'd encourage you to just go back to the prayer room.

Get on your knees before God and say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. He will. And though your sins be as scarlet, you can walk out of here tonight as white as snow.

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