

8. The Judgment Storm is COMING

August 31, 2014

2,700 years ago when this Book of Isaiah was written, the situation in Israel was not very good. The people in Southern Kingdom Judah was a blink away from extinction by the invasion of Assyria their northern neighboring kingdom, yet they did everything to anger and insult the Lord who had protected them all this time. Their sister kingdom Israel, a.k.a. Ephraim went too far in rejecting the Lord and He allowed them to be destroyed. But the Lord was extending His mercy to Judah for the sake of the lineage of Jesus Christ.

For America, the Lord doesn't have any obligation to keep her intact in the future. I see striking resemblances between what is happening in America today and what happened in ancient Judah and Israel. Yes, the Judgment Storm against America is coming as the judgment storm against Judah came upon them.

I find three things we must note in chapters of 28 through 31 so that we may not repeat what those Israel people did:

- 1) **The drunken and arrogant nation**
- 2) **Spiritual blindness**
- 3) **False confidence in anything but God**

A. THE DRUNKEN AND ARROGANT NATION

Isaiah 28:7-13 But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean. 9 " Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, 12 To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This is the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear. 13 But the word of the Lord was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little," That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.

The Lord was appalled by their drunkenness. To the Jews, wine was a gift from God and a source of joy. The Mosaic Law in the OT or the NT did not demand total abstinence, but it did warn against drunkenness – Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Proverb 20:1; 23:20-21, 29-35 to name a few. The Prophet Amos denounced the luxurious indulgences of the people in both Judah and Samaria in Amos 6.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit

According to the report by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) August 19, this year, excessive alcohol use led to approximately 88,000 deaths and 2.5 million combined years of potential life lost each year in the United States from 2006-2010, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 30 years. In comparison with that, 11,101 were killed in gun related homicide in 2011. By looking at the number of deaths by alcohol, I don't know why liberals don't want to ban alcohol as much as they want to ban guns.

Furthermore, excessive drinking was responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working - age adults aged 20-64 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2006 were estimated at \$223.5 billion. And over 50% of rape involved alcohol by perpetrators or victims.

A government official in Washington, D.C. once quipped, "We have three parties in this city: the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and the cocktail party." Indeed, Washington, D.C. ranks high on the list of cities noted for alcohol consumption. No wonder why those politicians cannot do anything right.

You may say, "I will never be a drunkard." I don't believe, for one moment, that any alcoholics started to drink alcohol to be a wino on the skid row somewhere or a drunk driver who just killed a child. They all started with that first drink or sip.

Not only were the people of Judah irresponsible with their lives, they were arrogant enough to mock God's prophet and rejected God's Word for them by ridiculing Isaiah.

Nations around the world, especially America, today often take a similar attitude toward God's servants and God's Word. People are so intoxicated by their own intellectual pride that they laugh at the simple message of the Gospel presented by simple and humble believers of Christ. They'd rather believe in their own farfetched fantasies that are jumbled with numbers, formulas, and wishful thinkings than the truth that comes from the Bible.

I like what an English journalist George Orwell said, "The further a society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it."

B. JESUS THE CORNERSTONE

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

As the people of Judah's only hope was in the tried and true foundation stone that is Jesus Christ, our hope should always remain with Him. He is our Rock of all ages, and all the other ground is sinking sand. If they had faith in their God Jehovah, they would not be rushing here and there, trying to forge alliances with pagan nations. This practice started with their forefather king Solomon.

Remember what happened to him? Because he made alliances with pagan nations around him through many marriages that his pagan wives led him to worship their pagan idols and he eventually walked away from the Lord.

This Scripture was quoted by apostle Peter in his epistle 1 Peter 2:6. The apostle applies this passage directly to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the foundation for our lives, and only with a secure, stable foundation can anything lasting be built. Anything "added on" to the house, not built upon the foundation, is sure to end up in wreckage.

During that time, the builder must lay down the cornerstone first, then he could put the rest of the stones together. God laid Jesus as our Cornerstone so that we could be aligned with Him. Then, we will have a firm foundation in our lives. Without that foundation, it is no wonder that unbelievers' lives are shamble.

The prime example of lousy foundation would be the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Scientists report that the 8 stories 179-foot bell tower moves about one -twentieth of an inch a year, and is now 17 feet out of plumb. They are doing everything they can to keep that unique building up on the ground. By the way, the word "pisa" means "marshy land," which should have given the original builders a clue to do something about the foundation. But obviously they didn't. As a matter of fact, the tower began to lean even before it was completed. And get this, its foundation is only 10 feet deep!

If you are not grounded in the Word of God daily, it is like you do not have a good foundation for your life. The Bible is not something you carry to the church on Sunday morning only, rather it should carry you in making decisions everyday. As you have heard, it doesn't matter how many times you go through the Bible in your life, but it matters how deep the Bible go through you.

C. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Isaiah 29:9-13 Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink. 10 For the Lord has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. 11 The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." 12 Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate." 13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men

Why were the people of Jerusalem so ignorant of what was going on? It is because their hearts were far from God. They went through the outward motions of worship and religiously kept the annual feasts, but it was not a true worship of God. Going to the temple was the popular thing to do, but most of the people did not take their worship seriously. Therefore, God allowed their spiritual blindness and stupor in His people so that they could not understand their own Law.

Such blindness persists today. If you came to church because it was something to do on Sunday; or feel obligated to God; or you are jammed in a bad situation, so you thought that coming to church would get some brownie points from the Lord; or you are simply dragged by your spouse, you came here with a wrong motive and it shows that you have the spiritual blindness.

In case you are wondering about the definition of spiritual blindness, here it is: Spiritual blindness is coming from an individual's own choice. It is a conscious decision to refuse the truth of God and chooses to accept strong delusion from satan that he or she would believe the lies from him. The consequence of this spiritual blindness is to have pleasure in unrighteousness in strong delusion and they believe the lies of satan that leads to separation from the Lord.

Many people today "read" or "receive" God's Word like an illiterate man "reads" the newspaper. They can pick out a few words here and there, and they can certainly look at the pictures. They can sit with an open newspaper, enjoy themselves to some degree, and appear to be reading. But the true content really escapes them.

This chapter 29 says a great deal about spiritual blindness:

- Spiritual blindness is caused by pride.
- Spiritual blindness will bring us low.
- Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual drunkenness.
- Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual sleep.
- Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual illiteracy.
- Spiritual blindness causes hypocrisy.
- Spiritual blindness makes men believe God cannot know what they think or see what they do.
- Spiritual blindness makes men deny God as Creator.
- Spiritual blindness is cured through humility.
- Spiritual blindness can only be healed through the Lord's restoration.

D. FALSE CONFIDENCE IN ANYTHING BUT GOD

Isaiah 30:1-3 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; 2 Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt! 3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation.

Isaiah here prophesied against the caravan that was then traveling from Jerusalem to Egypt with treasures to buy protection against Assyria. Please note what he said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in v3:

Isaiah 30:3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation.

From the perspective of God, the strength of Pharaoh was nothing . As the Lord saw it, Egypt was not a real power that could help Judah, but a shadow .

Just like that, the things or people whom we think that can help us are nothing more than our imagination or cannot help or don't want to do so. Many of us somehow think that our God is the last resort with a big sigh – " There is nothing else to do except pray." Prayer to the Lord should have been the first thing we should do. Many people tend to run to others to drop a hint many times.

It was bad enough that Judah rebelled against God by trusting Egypt instead of trusting Jehovah, and depending on money instead of on God's power , but they even went so far as to completely reject the Word of God.

Isaiah 30:8-11 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll, That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever: 9 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the Lord; 10 Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. 11 Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us."

Have you ever heard a phrase " Truth hurts"? Of course, you have. People don't want to hear Divine corrections against their actions and comments. They would stuff their spiritual ears with anything and everything so that they don 't have to face the fact including listening to lies from the pit of hell.

The problem God confronted in Judah didn't end in the days of Judah. Paul describes the same kind of heart in 2 Timothy 4:3-4:

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they

will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Joel Osteen tweets average 2-3 times a day to communicate his version of truths and faith of Christianity to his 2.6 million Tweeter followers. Since July 8, 2013, he tweeted 806 times. Do you know how many times he mentioned the name of ' Jesus' in his Tweet in a year? Once. Uno. How about 'Christ '? Twice. We already know that he doesn't talk about sin in his sermons.

Osteen is the America's most influential pastor, the guy with the biggest Church – 43,000 members, one of the most well-known and most recognized pastors with the biggest platform. Yet, he gives Christ-less gospel. I don't want to be him when he finally meets Jesus.

If you don't get the truth of God's Word from this pulpit, go somewhere where you can be taught the truth from the Bible, not patting your back.

E. APPLICATIONS

- 1) **No one is better than the Lord. Let 's go to Him for all of our needs in prayer FIRST.**
- 2) **God's truth doesn't hurt us to hurt us, rather to correct us to heal us.**
- 3) **God's judgment storm for America is coming . Don't be at the receiving side. Be on God's side.**