

# THE WOES TO THE WICKED

## PART 1

**DATE: 11/2/2016 Wed.**

**TEXT: Isaiah 5:8-19**

### INTRODUCTION

Tonight we begin the second section of **Isaiah 5** and **the 6 Woes**

I'd like to preach on this thought ...

#### **"THE WOES TO THE WICKED"**

The Word **Woe** is a very interesting word found in the Bible

The declaration of a Woe on someone can be found throughout the Scriptures

I found it used 107 times

So what exactly is being communicated when its use?

The word Woe indicates the coming of Grief; Sorrow; Misery; or a Heavy Calamity

In essences it's a Warning

We find it used here on those with Privilege and have not used their Privilege right

The Privileged are the Ungodly who, because of their Privilege, have no regard for God

## *The Woes to the Wicked – Isaiah 5:8-25*

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**Privilege** – is the opportunities and advantages enjoyed by a relatively small group of people, usually as a result of wealth or social status and because of Blessing

But with all Privilege comes responsibility

-- In the Books of the Prophets there are many Woes against Israel and Judah,

And also against the other nations which went after Israel

-- Jesus pronounced Woes upon those who should have been the leaders of God's people

But because of Privilege felt instead, they were Elite

We'd say that the blessings went to their heads not their hearts

-- The Book of Revelation shows that God's Woes will fall one day with mighty power on those who today disregard God

**Revelation 8:13** – *“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”*

In this next section of **Isaiah 5**, God, through the prophet, sets forth for us the transgressions of Judah

He does so by noting Six Woes in **vs. 8-25**

## *The Woes to the Wicked – Isaiah 5:8-25*

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We are taken through these Woes, which specifically identify the reasons justifying God's Pronouncement found in **Isaiah 5:7**

*“... He looked for judgment (justice), but behold oppression; for righteousness, (right attitudes) but behold a cry”*

**Micah 6:8** - *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”*

Let's pickup tonight in v.8

We'll be only looking at the first 3 Woes

Will you stand with me and let's read **vs. 8-19** together

~~~Prayer~~~

First we see the ...

### **I. THE WOE FOR THEIR “COVETOUSNESS” - vs. 8-10**

**Humor:** Though some in modern times might think that this passage is dealing with urban sprawl and over-development, that's not the case

Rather, the thought is about Avarice and Greed

First, let's look at ...

#### **A. The 'Practice' - v.8**

*“Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, ...*

*...that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!"*

The thought here is how that in Judah, *the Privileged* built, and developed, and planted crops until there was no place for the God-given inheritance of its other families

Judah was pursuing the almighty shekel to the exclusion of the prescribed inheritance of land for the people of Judah

*The Privileged* were taking away the land

**Deuteronomy 19:14 – “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it”**

**Deuteronomy 27:17 – “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen”**

**Proverbs 22:28 – “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set”**

**Job 24:2 – “Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof”**

**Proverbs 23:10 – “Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:”**

People were losing their inherited land

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The implication is Israel was not honoring the Year of Jubilee as defined in the Word of God

But instead were stealing and grabbing land

**Leviticus 25:13 – “In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession”**

Every 50th year was to be announced as a Jubilee year

All real property would automatically revert to its original owner – **Lev. 25:10, 13**

And those who, compelled by poverty, had sold themselves as slaves to their brothers, would regain their liberty – **Lev. 25:10, 39**

But that was not the case, this was not happening!

The rich were getting richer and the poor poorer

They were disobeying the Word of God

Their sin was Greed and Covetousness

God says; **“Don’t do that!”**

### **B. The ‘Punishment’ – vs. 9, 10**

Look what happened when the people didn’t listen

People have deceived themselves into believing that there is not recompense for wrong living

The Punishment would be 2 Fold ...

1. Desolate Houses - v. 9

***“In mine ears (Isaiah’s) said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate even great and fair, without inhabitant”***

The day was coming when the Houses in the Land of Israel would be emptied

That would take place when the Babylonian captivity came about in the not too distant future

***“In mine ears said the LORD of hosts”***

Referring to Isaiah's ears

The Prophet **Amos** said... 3:7 - ***“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but (as) He revealeth His secret unto his servants the prophets”***

***“Desolate”*** (ruin, waste)

This Hebrew word refers to the desolation caused by some great disaster, usually a result of divine judgment (as in the present passage) and stresses the horror caused by the desolation of judgment

The homes of the Privileged would no longer be occupied

In **II Chronicles** one of the reasons that the land was to be ***“desolate”*** for 70 years was because they had failed to allow the land to have its Sabbath rests every 7<sup>th</sup> year

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Not only had they failed to implement the Jubile but also failed to allow the Land to rest

In short, their 70 year exile in Babylon was to fulfill the command that God had given Israel, which they didn't obey

**Jeremiah 25:12 - “And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, ...”**

All the while Israel was in captivity the Land rested

Making up for the time that it didn't rest

**II Chronicles 36:21 - “To fulfil the Word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years”**

If you don't want to willfully obey God, then He has ways of changing your mind

Isaiah preaches against the futility of adding **“house to house”**

For the homes of the elite (**“even great and fair”**)

...Would become desolate and the land would become unproductive

God is not against wealth

But He is more interested in how we use what He gives us

**Deuteronomy 8:18 – “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day”**

Even the poorest here in America are richer than most in other parts of the world!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Punishment was ...

## 2. Diminished Yields – v. 10

The agriculture of the land would fail

**“Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall (only) yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall (only) yield an ephah”**

Though they had coveted wealth, the day was coming when a ten-acre vineyard would only produce about ten gallons of grape juice

That is a tiny fraction of what such a vineyard should produce

Moreover, their seed planted would produce only a small fraction of what was planted

The reverse should be the case

A small amount of seed should produce a crop many times greater

The analogy might be found in a farmer planting ten bushels of seed ...

... and getting a total crop of only one bushel in return

Judah had Pursued the Crop of Greed

They would Harvest Poverty instead

God can stop productivity very easily

Judgment would curse the fields, empty the stores, and starve the people

Don't think God can't do this to America as well!!

### THE WOE FOR THEIR “COVETOUSNESS”

## II. THE WOE FOR THEIR “CAROUSING” – vs. 11-17

... The second Woe is pronounced

When nations fail, we often find it's because they have given themselves over to Carousing

The origin of the word got its beginning with *the village festival and the revelry involved*

Lively celebration, usually involving eating, drinking, dancing, and noise

This second Woe deals with these problems

### A. The ‘Conduct’ – vs. 11, 12

***“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until***

*... night, till wine inflame them!” “And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of His hands”*

Let's look at the 3 distinct actions that are described here

1. The Drinking - v. 11

*“Rise up early... that they may follow strong drink”*

This chapter of Isaiah addresses so many important issues that are relevant to us today

One of the issues that Isaiah addressed as a factor of the downfall of the nation of Israel was the fact that a majority of the people struggled with alcohol

To the point that the nation would eventually be conquered by their enemies

They would lose their freedom and be taken into captivity

That should cause us to sit up and take notice

Is America following the same path?

Alcohol has become a scourge to the US

Social drinking has become common place today even among people who profess to be Christians

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I am absolutely amazed at how many Christians think there is nothing wrong with drinking beer, whiskey, wine, and other forms of alcohol,

...when the Bible gives to us verse after verse warning us of its use

The example that Christians set when they indulge in drinking liquor is absolutely devastating

-- Don't tell me you're concerned about winning people to Christ

-- Don't tell me you're concerned about your Christian testimony

-- Don't tell me you're concerned about the example you are setting for others

-- Don't tell you are concerned about glorifying the Lord

When you don't have any problem boozing it up!

**I Thessalonians 5:22 – “*Abstain from all appearance of evil*”**

Our nation is becoming a nation of boozers and alcoholics,

And Christians are unfortunately right there in the mix

The statistics among teenagers are alarming

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58% have been drunk by the time they are seniors in high school (Many much earlier today)

Liquor is at the heart of many of the problems we are facing (It is a Gateway Drug)

It is a key factor in car accidents and deaths, bankruptcy, gambling debts, poor job performance, job terminations, domestic violence and abuse, school truancy, sexual assaults, unwed pregnancies, and suicide (could I go on?)

It's said that Alcohol cost the US economy some 223.5 Billion dollars a year

Alcohol is a factor in approximately 50 percent of all motor vehicle deaths in the US

One third of those who have died were victims of someone else's drinking

Alcohol-related deaths outnumber deaths related to drugs, four-to-one

Alcohol is a factor in more than half of all domestic violence and sexual assault cases

Friends, Alcohol has a destructive impact upon people's lives, which in turn, harms a nation if most of the nation is involved

Isaiah reveals the consequences of a drunken nation

Christians should NOT be drinking liquor at all for any reason

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Believers should not be drinking whether socially or not!

### 2. The Dining – v. 12a

*“And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts:”*

Gluttony is a sin whether we want to admit it or not

**Proverbs 23:21 – “For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags”**

Israel was a land of Fat people

America is a land of Fat people and we are dealing with all kind of health issues because of it

The big thing today is to find any excuse to Party!

And partying always has Food and Adult Beverages

People don't get together today to enjoy each other's company

They get together to Eat & Drink way more then they need to

I think of the example of Eli and his sons in **I Samuel 2:12-17 ...**

Then lastly notice ...

### 3. The Disinterest – v. 12b (it caused)

***“but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of His hands”***

Described are the results of the revelry

Whether in private homes or in places of commercial entertainment,

Judah was given to partying, revelry, the world’s music, and drunkenness

They were no different than the sport’s parties, nightclub and bar scene of today

As a result, they had no Concern for God and His ways

Hosea had written a few years earlier against Israel to the north ...

***Hosea 4:11 - “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart”***

Immorality and drunkenness will numb a person’s heart to the things of God

Judah had become just like the pagan they lived among

And the (so-called) Christians are the same way

## **The ‘Conduct’**

Next let’s look at ...

## B. The ‘Condemnation’

... Because of their Conduct

God now pauses in the midst of His Indictment against Israel to announce the Coming Judgment

At least 5 aspects of the Condemnation are listed

### 1. Departure – v. 13 - “*My people are gone into captivity*”

Unholy living by the Israelites would result in a departure from their land into captivity of a foreign power

This is written in such a way as to indicate that it has already happened, it was as good as done!

### 2. Death – v. 14 - “*Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure*”

“*Hell*” may be speaking primarily about the grave here

But people who die without Christ go to Hell

Those in Israel who were not trusting God for their salvation are no different than someone today who will not trust Christ

### 3. Demotion – v. 15 - “*And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:*”

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The Condemnation from God would be humbling especially for the proud (“*the lofty*”)

But judgment was not only going to be against the Privileged (“*the mighty man*”)

Everyone who had forgotten God would be dealt with

Even “*the mean man* ” or common man

And might I mention, this would also have an effect on the Godly as well

4. Doxology - v. 16 - “*But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness*”

God will be honored one way or the other

If you do not honor Him in your blessings, you will honor Him in your judgment (God is just)

In stark contrast to the sin and wickedness of Judah,

...God would be exalted in His just judgment against the land

**Just** - *fair and impartial*

Notice how He is described as Holy

Therefore, as He judged Judah and its sin, God would be sanctified (made honorable) in His righteous judgment

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Because of the sin of Judah, the only Just action God could take was to Judge them

It would have been totally out of God's character not to (And we know that wasn't going to happen)

He thus would be exalted in righteousness and holiness in implementing Judgment

### 5. Desolation - v.17 - ***“Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat”***

The places of the well-to-do would become desolate

The idea is how foreigners would eat their lambs

The flocks of the land would wander and feed wherever

The pastures would become waste places

They would have no shepherds

Anyone passing by would take them for meat

The greater thought is of the land being depopulated to the point that there would be no one left to shepherd the sheep of the land

**THE WOE FOR THEIR “COVETOUSNESS”**

**THE WOE FOR THEIR “CAROUSING”**

**III. THE WOE FOR THEIR “CONTEMPT” – vs. 18, 19**

Verses 18 & 19 speak of Israel's Contempt for God

**Contempt** - is a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody or something considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect

**A. The Show of Contempt in their Sinfulness - v. 18**

*“Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:”*

They showed Contempt for God in their Lifestyle

The graphic analogy is of a man dragging sin around with a heavy rope

They weren't about to let it go

Moreover, their sin was **“vanity”** - empty, foolish, and worthless

Sin quickly becomes a burden, yet men drag their sin around year after year as burdensome as it is

**Hebrews 12:1** - *“...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us”*

Sin weaves webs which become unbreakable

It chains men with its shackles

Yet, sinful mankind continues to drag it with them wherever they go

( I think of the visit of Marley in a Christmas Carol)

**Proverbs 5:22 – “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins”**

They showed Contempt for God by not repenting of their sin

They had no Conviction

Then there’s ...

### **B. Their Show of Contempt for the Sovereign – v. 19**

This is probably the worst thing they could have done!

As if it wasn’t bad enough that they Defined God by the way they lived

Now they have the nerve to Define God with their Words!

***“Woe unto them ...” “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!”***

Defiantly that spoke out against God

The men of Judah scoffed at the foretold judgment

They impudently taunted God to do it soon, if He was going to do it at all

However, when the judgment of God did come, their tune quickly changed

**II Peter 3:2-4 – “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:” “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,” “And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”**

**Galatians 6:7, 8 – “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”**

## **CONCLUSION**

**What can I say but, Woe!**

**THE WOE FOR THEIR “COVETOUSNESS”**

**THE WOE FOR THEIR “CAROUSING”**

**THE WOE FOR THEIR “CONTEMPT”**