

God Has Had Enough Yesha'yahu 1:10-17

In my last post, we examined **Yesha'yahu 1:1-9 ~ The Rebellion of God's People**. In this post, we continue in **Yesha'yahu 1: 10-17** to learn that **God Has Had Enough**.

¹⁰ Hear what Adonai says, you rulers of S'dom! Listen to God's Torah, you people of 'Amora! ¹¹ 'Why are all those sacrifices offered to me?' asks Adonai. 'I'm fed up with burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened animals! I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats! ¹² Yes, you come to appear in my presence; but who asked you to do this, to trample through my courtyards? ¹³ Stop bringing worthless grain offerings! They are like disgusting incense to me! Rosh-Hodesh [New Moon festival], Shabbat, calling convocations - I can't stand evil together with your assemblies! ¹⁴ Everything in me hates your Rosh-Hodesh and your festivals; they are a burden to me - I'm tired of putting up with them! ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; no matter how much you pray, I won't be listening; because your hands are covered with blood. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves clean! Get your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, defend orphans, plead for the widow.'" ~ Isaiah 1:10-17 (CJB)

In these verses, God expressed His revulsion at the religious practices of His people. The disgusting thing about His rebellious people is that they were also a religious people (Isaiah 1:10-15). They attended the **Temple** services and brought a multitude of sacrifices to the Lord. However, their hearts were far from God, and their worship was hypocritical. In other words, they were too heavenly minded and no earthly good.

Sacrifices alone can never please God. God wants our inward obedience (1 Samuel 15:22), a broken heart (Psalm 51:17), and a godly walk (Micah 6:8).

Though God will not punish the people with total annihilation as He did the cities of **S'dom** and **'Amora**, it is not as if they did not deserve that fate. Their rulers were like the inhabitants of those depraved cities who denied hospitality to strangers and engaged in perverse sexual acts.

God had commanded His people to offer sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7, but the sacrifices of His people were reprehensible to Him. They were not offered with pure motives of sincere repentance. Rather, they were offered with hands covered with blood.

The **Temple** was considered a sacred space that was protected by closely monitored, restricted access. Admission to the general public was granted only when a sacrifice needed to be offered and then only to the outer court. Entrance to sacred space for anything but holy purpose would be sacrilegious trespassing. Recall the account of Yeshua cleansing the **Temple** of the merchants and the money-changers in Matthew 21:12-13.

In the ancient world, **incense** was valued as an accompaniment to sacrifice. Its sweet scent effectively masked any of the unpleasant odors resulting from the performance of the rituals. It was expensive and commanded in Leviticus 2:1.

Keyed to the use of a lunar calendar, ancient Israel marked the first day of the month with **Rosh-Hodesh**. It is "new moon" phase festival day every twenty-nine or thirty days. As on the Sabbath, all work was to cease (see Numbers 10:10), and there were sacrifices to be made. What had been designed as a means to praise and honor God, however, was not bringing any pleasure to him.

Why wouldn't God hear the prayers of His people? Because their sacrifices, times of worship, and even prayers were not acceptable because their hands were covered with blood. That is, they sinned and did not repent but still participated in worship. God did not tolerate such hypocritical behavior.

Sometimes we wonder why our prayers aren't answered. We go to church regularly. We lift our hands in praise. We tithe. But God says all of that is irrelevant if we're harboring sin in our life. If we're compromising, if we're trying to be righteous through our efforts or energy, if we're failing to realize our need to come before God in brokenness, God won't answer our prayers - not because He's mad at us or because He doesn't like us anymore, but because He's saying, *"There's something wrong in your relationship with Me. If I continue to answer your prayers, you will persist in those things, and they'll destroy you. So you're not going to sense My presence. You're not going to have answers to your prayers so that you might seek Me."*¹

This passage gives a prescription for change - repent. Transformation involves a cessation of evil activities as well as the requirement of good deeds. The good deeds are defined as social justice, particularly resisting oppressors and promoting the interests of the vulnerable (the orphans and the widows).

"The religious observance that God the Father considers pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being contaminated by the world."
~ James 1:27 (CJB)

In my next post, I will explore **Yesha'yahu 1:18-31 ~ The Unfaithful City.**

¹ Jon Courson's Application Commentary Old Testament Volume 2.