

## The Unfaithful City Yesha'yahu 1:18-31

In my last post, we examined **Yesha'yahu 1: 10-17** to learn that **God Has Had Enough**. In this post, we continue in **Yesha'yahu 1:18-31** learn about **The Unfaithful City**.

*<sup>18</sup> 'Come now,' says Adonai, 'let's talk this over together. Even if your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow; even if they are red as crimson, they will be like wool. <sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land; <sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel, you will be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of Adonai has spoken.'*

*<sup>21</sup> 'How the faithful city [Yerushalayim] has become a whore! Once she was filled with justice, righteousness lodged in her; but now murderers! <sup>22</sup> Your silver is no longer pure; your wine is watered down. <sup>23</sup> Your leaders are rebels, friends of thieves. They all love bribes and run after gifts. They give no justice to orphans; the widow's complaint doesn't catch their attention.' <sup>24</sup> 'Therefore,' says the Lord, Adonai-Tzva'ot, the Mighty One of Isra'el, 'I will free myself of my adversaries, I will take vengeance on my enemies. <sup>25</sup> But I will also turn my hand against you! I will cleanse your impurities as with lye and remove all your alloyed base metal. <sup>26</sup> I will restore your judges as at first and your advisers as at the beginning. After that, you will be called the City of Righteousness, Faithful City. <sup>27</sup> Tziyon will be redeemed by justice; and those in her who repent, by righteousness. <sup>28</sup> Rebels and sinners together will be broken, and those who abandon Adonai will be consumed. <sup>29</sup> You will be ashamed of the sacred oaks you desired; you will blush at the gardens you chose; <sup>30</sup> for you will be like an oak whose leaf fades, like a garden without any water. <sup>31</sup> The strong will be like tinder and [the idol's] maker like a spark; both will burn together, and no one will put them out.' ~ Isaiah 1:18-31 (CJB)*

As we learned in my last post, the people were full of blood and sin, apathy and iniquity - and yet Yeshua might say, *"My blood will wash you clean if you'll just come before Me and admit your need of My work and mercy in your life."*

That's what we're to do. *"If we acknowledge our sins, then, since He is trustworthy and just, He will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing."* ~ 1 John 1:9 (CJB) All He asks from you and me is, to be honest before Him and say, *"I know this isn't right, Father. I need Your mercy. Deal with me. Help me. Change me."*

God's people were not always corrupt. The formerly faithful city - **Yerushalayim** - had become corrupt. The worship of false gods, idolatry, is often described as a form of adultery. Dross and watered-down wine are symbols of impurity. The rulers of **Y'hudah** were corrupt. They sought their financial advantage and neglected the rights and needs of the socially vulnerable (the widow and the orphans).

Many of the worshipers in the **Temple** participated in these evil practices and thereby encouraged the decay of the nation. The rulers maintained a religious facade to cover up their crimes, and this practice was allowed by them. It seems we may have the same problem now in our denominations these days.

God will not let the guilty escape their punishment. The judgment is not just punitive; it purifies. The people started a faithful city (v. 21), and after their cleansing, they will again be a Faithful City.

The people of God sinned by their idolatry that often took the form of worshiping false gods with foreign rituals. One common form of this false worship involved **sacred oaks** that were probably connected with the worship of a Canaanite fertility goddess called **Asherah**, the mother of Ba'al.

What would God do if the people did not repent? He would send a fiery judgment that would purge the dross and burn up those whose rebellion had made them His enemies (vv. 24-31). Yesha'yahu closes this first message with a promise of hope that one day **Yerushalayim** would become a ***City of Righteousness, Faithful City.***

In my next post, I will explore **Yesha'yahu 2:1-5 ~ The Mountain of the Lord.**