

The Six Woes and Judgments of Isra'el ~ Part 2 Yesha'yahu 5:18-21

In my last post, we began to explore the **Six Woes and Judgments of Isra'el** in **Yesha'yahu 5:8ff**. We covered the first two of six woes **Yesha'yahu** declares to **Isra'el**. In this post, we continue to unpack the next three woes of **Isra'el** in **Yesha'yahu 5:18-21**.

18 Woe to those who begin by pulling at transgression with a thread but end by dragging sin along as if with a cart rope. 19 They say, "We want God to speed up his work, to hurry it along, so we can see it! We want the Holy One of Isra'el's plan to come true right now, so we can be sure of it!"

Liberalism and looseness are the third woe. Their sin was one of cynicism. With a tone of disbelief, they challenged God to act. People plunge into sin and then mistake the mercy, patience, and long-suffering of God for apathy, impotence, or even approval. Our Father is incredibly long-suffering, and the wheels of His judgment turn slowly. He waits for us to repent and to come to our senses - but eventually, we will find ourselves ground up in the inevitable wheels of justice.

Augustine of Hippo says of verse 18: ¹

"Every man braids a rope for himself in his sins. Who makes the rope long? Who adds sin to sin? How are sins added to sins? When sins that have been committed are combined with other sins! Someone committed a theft. To ensure that no one may find out he committed it, he seeks out an astrologer. It would be enough to have committed the theft; why do you want to join a second sin to the first? Then you have two sins. When you are forbidden to go to an astrologer, you rebuke the bishop. Now there are three sins. When you hear it said of you, 'Cast him out of the Church,' you reply, 'I will go to the party of Donatus.' Now you have added a fourth sin. The rope is growing. Beware of the rope!"

20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who change darkness into light and light into darkness, who change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter!

Relativism and existentialism - the lack of absolutes - is the fourth woe. How many times have we heard sayings such as?

"Dark is light, and light is dark. Sweet is bitter and bitter is sweet. You can't say what's right and wrong for everyone. What's right for you may or may not be right for me. The only absolute is that there are no absolutes. Just do whatever you want."

They classified actions as an evil that God would call good and vice versa. While the principle is broader than judicial, such moral confusion was particularly reprehensible in the courtroom as we will see in verse 23.

21 Woe to those seeing themselves as wise, esteeming themselves as clever. ~ Isaiah 5:18-21 (CJB)

The fifth woe is intellectualism. The human issue is one of autonomy. Many self-proclaimed intellectuals are agnostics - but the Bible says it is the fool who has said in his heart that there is no God (see Psalm 14:1). This would be like an ant defiantly declaring that he doesn't believe in man. I could yell and jump up and down in front of him to prove my existence, but his perspective is so puny, his intellect so small, his perception so restricted that he doesn't see me. Does that mean I don't exist? No, it means he's too small to see me. The only way I would be able to save that ant from destruction would be to become an ant. That's what God did

¹ The Church's Bible – Isaiah: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators.

with us. God said, *"I love you so much; I'll become one of you to talk to you about life and death, heaven and hell, sin and salvation."* That's how much our Lord loves us.

In my next blog, we will conclude our examination of **The Six Woes and Judgments of Isra'el ~ Part 3** in **Yesha'yahu 5:22-30**.