

*A journey through Isaiah 1*

WHY, HOW, AND WHEN  
*God Judges a  
Nation*

Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Bowman

WHY, HOW, AND WHEN GOD JUDGES A NATION

*1*

THE ROOT OF REBELLION

*2*

CORRECTION AND HEALING

## INTRODUCTION

As we read the first chapter of Isaiah, it's as though Isaiah has dice in his hand. Three sides say "Judgment" and three sides say "Redemption." And he tosses it time and time again, expounding on whatever side lands topside. Both judgment and redemption happen for a reason, and God is never shy in His word regarding what precedes either one. Preceding factors are often the actions of men, although not in the thinking of men, because it is often without thought and consideration that decisions are made and plans set in motion that affect persons, families, and nations for generations. So the big picture is more a game of choice than a game of chance.

Isaiah 1:1 says, "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (NASB).

From this verse, we know that Isaiah ministered as a prophet 39 years during the reigns of four kings between about 740-701 B.C. Jewish tradition says that Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, an evil king, martyred Isaiah by sawing him in half. Paul's reference in Hebrews 11:37 regarding the fate of the faithful, where he says, "...some were sawn in two," is thought to be regarding this event. We also see in verse 1 that Isaiah's prophecies were concerning the southern kingdom of Judah

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and its capital, Jerusalem.

Chapters 1-39 of Isaiah primarily deal with events that happened during Isaiah's lifetime. Chapter 40 begins a section looking forward to Judah's return from Babylonian captivity in the 6th century B.C., some 200 years later.

My purpose in this short study is to look at the first chapter of Isaiah to see why, how, and when God judges a nation. Additionally, I want to see if the understanding we gain can be applied to America and the church in the times we live.

Some might challenge any attempt to apply a prophetic text written 2,750 years ago to our contemporary scene. This pushback should be expected, especially of a prophetic text fulfilled mainly during the prophet's lifetime. Allow me to respond to this challenge. When approaching a prophetic text, I tend to examine it with a Hebraic, cyclical mindset rather than in a Greco-Roman linear or timeline manner. That means I believe in a dual or multiple fulfillment of particular Bible prophecies. And because I believe in a God who changes not, I think moral principles outlined in the Old Testament carry through to the New Testament.

The first chapter of Isaiah is like a condensed "Cliff Notes" version of prophetic writings throughout the Old Testament. There is a pattern revealed that clearly shows why, how, and when God judges a nation. I hope that we will learn from it and avoid the pitfalls that impacted ancient Israel.

## CHAPTER 1- THE ROOT OF REBELLION

In the early verses, we can easily see that rebellion in God's people is the condition that God exposed through His prophet Isaiah:

*Listen, heavens, and hear, earth; For the LORD has spoken: "Sons I have raised and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand." Oh, sinful nation, People weighed down with guilt, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.*

*(Isa 1:2-4 NASB)*

But let us look at specific forms their rebellion took. In verse 2, Isaiah calls on the heavens to listen and the earth to hear because the people had ceased to do so; "...for the LORD hath spoken," but no one was listening or hearing. And God's own sons, whom He had reared, revolted against Him. The basic meaning is an aggressive revolt, breach of a civil or religious relationship between two parties. So we see here they quit listening and, therefore, could not hear and aggressively broke away from their relationship with God.

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Because of this rebellion, we read that it brought a lack of knowledge and understanding. Their primary "street smarts" or working knowledge became less than simple animals, who at least knew who fed them and where they could find shelter. And they lacked sensibility, no longer able to discern between good and evil.

Author and Pastor Warren W. Wiersbe (1929-2019) said this about rebellion:

*It is dangerous to rebel against the will and the Word of God and to turn away from His path. Psalm 107 describes the fate of people who did. "Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons . . . therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help" (vv. 10,12). Verse 11 tells us why this happened: "Because they rebelled against the words of God, and despised the counsel of the Most High."*

*This is the terrible and painful plight of all who rebel against God's will and Word--darkness, death and despair. Instead of being on that wonderful road that leads to glory, they are down in the dungeon in darkness and in bondage, under the shadow of death. People say, "I want to do my own thing. I want to do it my way." They shouldn't. The greatest judgment God might bring to our lives is to let us have our own way. Paul wrote that God gave mankind over to uncleanness, vile passions and a debased mind (Rom. 1:18-32). God says to those who rebel against Him, "Do you want to go in that direction? All right, I won't stop you, but neither will I change the consequences."<sup>1</sup>*

1. Wiersbe, Warren. "Consequences of Rebellion." Back to the Bible, [www.backtothebible.org/devotions/consequences-of-rebellion](http://www.backtothebible.org/devotions/consequences-of-rebellion).

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In verse 4, we find the natural outcome of their rebellion and the consequences of their lack of knowledge and understanding. "Oh" (or Ah) is an expression of sorrow, grief, pity, concern, or apprehension of evil. God says "Oh...," and I believe every nuance of the word was in His thoughts as He calls them a sinful nation, people heavy-laden with perverseness, sons who corrupt morally. They had forsaken the Lord. They had scorned the Holy One of Israel. They had played the harlot. They walked away from God and His favor.

On April 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln, in following the mandate of a Senate resolution proclaiming a National Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer, had the good sense to remind the nation of its folly. He said in part:

*We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, the many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to God that made us It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.<sup>2</sup>*

2. "A Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer." Christian Blogs - Delivered By Grace, 30 Apr. 2012, [www.deliveredbygrace.com/a-day-of-national-humiliation-fasting-and-prayer/](http://www.deliveredbygrace.com/a-day-of-national-humiliation-fasting-and-prayer/).

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I wonder if our current political leaders have the same sense, morals, and guts to admit the foolishness we still find ourselves in and make a plea for the same response to "the offended Power"?

In verse 5, God asks a rhetorical question through the mouth of Isaiah. A rhetorical question is a question asked to make a point, make one consider, and not a question meant to be answered aloud. The answer is often provided in the words of the one asking the question. So the question is asked in 5a and answered in 5b-8.

*Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The entire head is sick And the entire heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing healthy in it, Only bruises, slashes, and raw wounds; Not pressed out nor bandaged, Nor softened with oil. Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire; As for your fields, strangers are devouring them in front of you; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers. The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a city under watch.*

*(Isa 1:5-8 NASB)*

*With the question asked, "Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion?" the answer is clear. There is no place their rebellion has left them unaffected. The whole head is sick; their leadership is corrupt. The entire heart, or moral seat, of the nation is faint. No wholesomeness exists from the sole of the foot (the lowly) to the head (those is power).*

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There are only bruises, welts, and raw wounds; the signs of their rebellion are apparent. Not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil; they've lost understanding to the point they ignore the open, festering wounds, inviting further infection and depravity.

The land is in as bad a shape as they are; it is ravaged. Their cities, places of habitation, are burned with fire; actual or symbolic, and perhaps prophetic of later destruction during Babylonian captivity or in 70 AD (Mat 22:7). Strangers are committing adultery with the source of their sustenance. And Jerusalem, here depicted as the daughter of Zion, is left alone and abandoned like a watchman's booth in the field after the harvest is gathered, a city cut off from life.

In verse 9, we have the first mention in Isaiah of a remnant; an important truth throughout the Old Testament, especially the Prophets. "If the LORD of armies Had not left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah." (Isa 1:9).

No matter what dealings God had with man and later Israel, there was always a remnant preserved through which the "seed of the woman," prophesied in Genesis 3:15, could be born. If God had not been mindful to keep a remnant in Judah for the seed to come through the lineage of King David, He might have reduced them to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. And there is a remnant now; "true Israel"; the Bride of Christ Paul speaks of in Romans 9:29, referencing Isaiah's words.

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As I described Isaiah's dice toss in the Introduction, we see that the why, how, and when of God's judgment against a nation can come in waves, overlapping as the ebb and flow of the ocean.

We have seen so far in Isaiah 1 *why* God judges a nation; rebellion. In this case, rebellion, taking the form of no longer listening to and hearing God's voice and forcefully breaking away from a relationship with Him. Imagine a husband or wife strongly pushing away their spouse to chase after another.

We have also seen *how* God judges a nation. He simply backs off and lets it reap the rewards of its sinfulness. Proverbs 21:4 says, "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin." Proverbs 14:34 tells us, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people." They wholeheartedly walked away from God's favor and did as they pleased. This did not please God. Whether we say they walked away from God or God withdrew His protective hand from them, it is in big trouble when a nation loses the favor of God. In Isaiah 1:10-15 we will see *when* God judges a nation.

*Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Listen to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah! "What are your many sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fattened cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courtyards? "Do not go on bringing your worthless offerings, Incense is an abomination to Me. New*

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*moon and Sabbath, the proclamation of an assembly— I cannot endure wrongdoing and the festive assembly. “I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am tired of bearing them. “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you offer many prayers, I will not be listening. Your hands are covered with blood.*

*(Isa 1:10-15 NASB)*

Do we get a sense that God has had enough of their religiosity? Paul makes mention of this in Romans 9:27-33:

*Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL MAY BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, ONLY THE REMNANT WILL BE SAVED; FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.” And just as Isaiah foretold: “IF THE LORD OF ARMIES HAD NOT LEFT US DESCENDANTS, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE GOMORRAH.” What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, but the righteousness that is by faith; however, Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though they could by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written: “BEHOLD, I AM LAYING IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.”*

*(Rom 9:27-33 NASB)*

And again in 2 Timothy 3:1-5:

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*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power; avoid such people as these.*  
(2 Tim 3:1-5 NASB)

Coming back to Isaiah 1, God gives His people a remedy for the loss of His favor in verses 16 and 17:

*"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Stop doing evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor, Obtain justice for the orphan, Plead for the widow's case."*  
(Isa 1:16-17 NASB)

There is only one course of action in God's mind when we sin, and that is repentance. The washing God refers to here is not a ceremonial washing. It means clean up your conduct; as it says, "cease to do evil." But ceasing from evil is not enough. They must learn to do well. Throwing off those things that have separated them from God is just one side of the coin. God wants their repentance evident with fruit worthy of repentance (Mat 3:8). Seek justice. That is, reflecting God's attributes, His character in your judgments. Reprove the ruthless, those brutal, malicious ones among you. Be active arbitrators for the orphans. Plead the cause of the widow. This was the fruit of

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repentance God wanted to see.

As we continue, it would seem from a casual reading of verse 18 that God had softened a bit and just wanted to sit down and have a chat with them. Many versions say "Come now, let us reason together..."

*"Come now, and let us debate your case," Says the LORD,  
"Though your sins are as scarlet, They shall become as white as  
snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be like  
wool.*

*(Isa 1:18)*

The word debate here is a legal term that means have an argument, to mediate. What God is saying through the voice of Isaiah is "I'll see you in court!"

He then lays out the terms of His settlement in verses 19 and 20, as both prosecutor and judge:

*"If you are willing and obedient, You will eat the best of the  
land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the  
sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

*(Isa 1:19-20 NASB)*

That phrase, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken," says it all.

## CHAPTER 2 - CORRECTION AND HEALING

In the last chapter, we saw why, how, and when God judges a nation. But we also saw God offer a way out for Judah and Jerusalem through repentance. Repentance has always stood as the door by which relationship is restored with God, both in the Old and New Testaments. Dr. Paul Adams helps us see this more clearly in Jesus' story of the returning prodigal son (Luke 15:20-24):

*Repentance always takes you back to where you sinned, so that you can admit that it was wrong and determine not to follow that path again. In Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son the foolish young man had decided to repent, but knew he had to return to his father's house to deliver his confession and seek his mercy. But his father was already waiting for his return. Seeing him in the distance the old man ran to greet him, driven by love.*

*Wrapped in parental embrace, the prodigal admitted his sin against God and his father.*

*He may have expected recrimination; but no! His father not only accepted the apology but gave him no time to beg for a servant's job. Instead he was fully reinstated as a son. More than that, a great celebration was organised and the errant son was made 'guest of honour' with new clothes. The ring was the family signet ring, showing that the father now fully trusted the young man with his business.*

*In the parable, the father represents Father God: His grace is so*

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*generous that even those who have wasted their inheritance are given as much again when they come back in repentance. Jesus was teaching that true repentance leads to full restoration of relationship with God. What amazing grace! The devil does not like that message and so sows evil seeds of doubt. Satan says, "You are not good enough to be accepted ... you will have to do many good things to prove you are trustworthy ... you can never have the same place in God's affections again ... how do you know your repentance is real ... how can you trust yourself again ... God will not welcome you through the front door!" However God says, "Welcome, celebrate; my son is home again"! So, don't listen to Satan's lies or believe that relationship with God depends on your goodness. It is two-way. When you repent Father God comes to meet you, welcome you and restore you. That is the wonder of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup>*

We left Isaiah 1:20 with the phrase, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Remember God had said in essence, "I will see you in court!" As we move forward with verses 21-23, we get a further reminder of how bad the situation in Judah and Jerusalem had become:

*How the faithful city has become a prostitute, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once dwelt in her, But now murderers. Your silver has become waste matter, Your drink diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And chases after gifts. They do not obtain justice for the orphan, Nor does the widow's case*

<sup>3</sup>Adams, Paul. "Repentance Leads to Restoration ." Word@Work, [www.wordatwork.org.uk/luke/repentance-leads-restoration](http://www.wordatwork.org.uk/luke/repentance-leads-restoration).

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*come before them.*

*(Isa 1:21-23 NASB)*

Several years ago, I ran across an article outlining a local grassroots effort to force a local district attorney to resign. Some of the allegations against him included trying cases with a personal vendetta, out to win cases at any cost, self-absorbed behavior, official oppression of people by his office, blatant disregard for our legal system, great disservice to the protection of children, leaving good people with bad reputations, wasting tax-payer dollars, giving favors to his friends, a long history of wrong doing, and my personal favorite: behaving like a shady, corrupt punk! Those allegations sound very much like the indictment we just read against Jerusalem. We next see both angst and resolve in the voice of the Lord.

*Therefore the Lord GOD of armies, The Mighty One of Israel, declares, "Ah, I will have satisfaction against My adversaries, And avenge Myself on My enemies. "I will also turn My hand against you, And smelt away your impurities as with lye; And I will remove all your slag. "Then I will restore your judges as at first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city."*

*(Isa 1:24-26 NASB)*

Here, as in verse 4, we have a word that one would rather not see as the opening as the Lord begins to address His people. "Ah" is akin to Alas or Woe. It is an exclamation point at the beginning of a sentence to that which follows. As "John Gill's

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Exposition of the Bible" says, "Ah! which is a particle, either expressive of grief at their wretched and miserable condition, or of indignation at their provoking sins and transgressions." Considering the remainder of verse 24 and verse 25, it would seem that divine indignation is what is intended in this case.

"I will have satisfaction against My adversaries, And avenge Myself on My enemies" puts even greater light on how God feels about their provoking sins and transgressions. In "Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions-Volume 2," English churchman Robert South (1633–1716) says:

*"This we may rest satisfied of, that whensoever God's hand is upon us, we must either yield a voluntary, or be forced to a violent, submission. If our stubbornness is such that we will not bend, it is certain that our weakness is also such that we must needs break. If God's message will not win upon Pharaoh, His plagues shall compel him; and therefore, when He sent Moses to him, He put a rod into his hand, as well as a word into his mouth. When God fully purposes to afflict a man, he is like a bird in a net, the more he strives and flutters, the more he is entangled; for the Supreme Judge of all things is resolved to go through with His great work of judgment, and to make all obstinate, sturdy sinners know, that He has power to constrain where His goodness will not persuade."*

"I will also turn My hand against you, And smelt away your impurities as with lye; And I will remove all your slag" (verse 25). Notice here that even in God's displeasure, His proposed discipline toward them is not in a vindictive fashion. Much like

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a surgeon skillfully using his scalpel to cut away areas of infected flesh, God says His dealings with them, although severe, will be healing and restorative in nature. Hosea 6:1 tells us, "Come, let's return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us."

We notice first the cutting away of that which is rotten and then restoration of order and Godly influence in the nation. "Then I will restore your judges as at first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city." (verse 26). The phrases "as at first" and "at the beginning" refer to a time when God's rule was administered by appointed judges over Israel. Israel finally rebelled and demanded a king like other nations. We can assume from this that God wants to restore righteous judges and competent counselors, as Israel had a long history of judges and kings that were good leaders and bad. The main point here is that God desires to be their King, regardless of who might lead, judge, and counsel them in a temporal sense. In this, Jerusalem would once again be called the Righteous and Faithful City. The means and end are again restated in verse 27: "Zion will be redeemed with justice And her repentant ones with righteousness" (Isa 1:27 NASB).

In our modern quagmire of misunderstanding God's nature, the word judgment has been sidelined in favor of rampant universalism and the "doctrine" of tolerance. In writing about judgment in his book "From Grace to Grace: The Transforming Power of Holiness," Professor Mark R. Quanstrom says:

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*Regardless of our ability to appreciate fully the implications of God's wrath—which results in judgment—the testimony of the Scripture and the tradition of the Christian faith is clear: the destiny of each person is determined by the judgment of Christ. In light of this clear testimony, a prerequisite to renewing the call to holiness comes through a renewed understanding of the character of God, who is holy love, and who is, therefore, wholly hostile to evil, and who must and will hold people accountable. More specifically, if there is an anemic holiness movement today, it might be due partly to anemic understanding of the holy character of God, whose love demands that he hate sin and must destroy it."<sup>4</sup>*

Thus, God's love for Judah and Jerusalem required Him to judge their sin.

As we move on, let us look at the relationship of verse 27 with that of verse 28: "But wrongdoers and sinners together will be broken, And those who abandon the LORD will come to an end." (Isa 1:28). "The Preachers Complete Homiletical Commentary" has this to say regarding the relationship of these verses:

*"These verses are closely and vitally connected: it is a mistake to separate them, as in the Authorised Version. Their meaning would be conveyed to the English reader, if they were translated—'Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; and thereby also the transgressors and sinners shall be destroyed, yea they that*

4.Quanstrom, Mark R. From grace to grace: the transforming power of holiness. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2011.

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*forsake the Lord shall be consumed.' By judgment is meant the doom which in the preceding verses had been threatened against guilty Jerusalem (e.g., Isa\_1:18): this 'judgment' would be a manifestation of God's punitive righteousness, and the declaration is that the infliction of this 'judgment' would have a twofold effect—it would redeem Zion and her converts, and it would destroy the transgressors and sinners." We sometimes fail to realize that judgment exposes the good while abolishing the bad. It is the removing of the dross that exposes the metal.*

"And they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed, You certainly will be ashamed of the oaks which you have desired, And you will be embarrassed by the gardens which you have chosen. For you will be like an oak whose leaf withers away, Or like a garden that has no water" (Isa 1:29-30 NASB). Again "The Preachers Complete Homiletical Commentary" sheds good light on these verses:

*"In modern days, when men' forsake the Lord,' they become simply irreligious—practical atheists; but in ancient times such men became idolaters, they became worshippers of idols set up under the 'oaks' planted on the hilltops, or in gardens. It is almost impossible for us to understand the fascination of idol-worship, but it was very powerful, and the idols were made objects of passionate trust. They were regarded as the strength of those who served them. Trusting in their protection their votaries went forth confidently to battle. Defeat did not dispel this delusion; it was interpreted to mean merely that the god of the victors was mightier than the god of the vanquished. To men glorying in their false deities, and confiding in their*

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*protection, the prophet predicts utter destruction. You shall be consumed, he says; the day is at hand when ye shall be caused to blush for your gods; you yourselves shall be withered oaks, and gardens without water; yea, your idols, and ye who have made them, for they are but things, the work of your hands, shall be burned together in unquenchable fire. The theme of these verses is therefore the doom of the apostates, and of the objects of their trust."*

Although we certainly see great practical atheism in our day, I believe out and out idolatry in humanity is currently evident and has been from the beginning of man. In fact, Paul wrote about it more than 2000 years ago:

*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*(Rom 1:21-25 NASB)*

As blogger Gene S. Whitehead says:

*"Idolatry isn't an Eastern mysticism thing and it's not a*

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*Western consumerism thing. It's a human thing and regardless of whether or not we physically bow down before a statue, we all have idols in our lives. It's anything that becomes more important than God and we all have something at sometime that does it." 5*

"The strong man will become like flax fiber, And his work a spark. So they shall both burn together And there will be no one to extinguish them" Isa 1:31. So the sinner along with the sin he so trusted in will be destroyed together. There are those who will not recognize their sin and therefore see no need for repentance. Many in this generation have come to that point and sadly many at the words of a false prophet in sheep's clothing. Our pulpits are full of those who peddle the wares of cheap grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said:

*"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."*

Isaiah 5:13 says, "Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude is parched with thirst" (NASB). Footnotes for this verse in the NASB renders the literal translation of "and their honorable men are famished" as "their glory are men of

5.Whitehead, Gene S. "Recognizing Idolatry in 8 Modern Day Idols." Gene S. Whitehead, 1 Nov. 2017, [genewhitehead.com/recognizing-idolatry-in-8-modern-day-idols/](http://genewhitehead.com/recognizing-idolatry-in-8-modern-day-idols/).

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famine." Imagine a people who are captive and so decimated that their glory, the thing they might boast about, are no longer men of honor and renown but men of famine. And the people fare no better, parched with thirst. Might I suggest that because their honored leaders did little to provide knowledge, they became a famine to the people, and both the leaders and people suffered for it?

The church in our day is at the brink. She will either be taken captive by the false teachers of our day or avail herself of the bread of life and living waters that Jesus provides by His word and Spirit. There is hope for the church. But she must wake up, recognize the times, and act accordingly. Ephesians 5 says:

*For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*  
*(Eph 5:14-17 NASB)*

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REV. DR. J. PATRICK BOWMAN AND HIS WIFE, JAN, LIVE AND MINISTER FROM THE DALLES, OREGON, USA, IN THE MIDST OF THE SPECTACULAR COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.



PATRICK EARNED A DOCTORATE IN BIBLICAL STUDIES AND HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST IN HOLINESS LITERATURE FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AS WELL AS COMMUNICATING FUNCTIONAL HOLINESS TO THE BODY OF CHRIST. HE IS AN ORDAINED ELDER IN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WESLEYAN EVANGELICALS.