THE PUNISHMENT FOR PERSISTENCE

**DATE: 11/30/2016 Wed.**

**TEXT: Isaiah 5:25-30**

**INTRODUCTION**

We now come to the last section of **Isaiah chapter 5**

In this section we will see the Punishment God says is coming because of Israel’s Persistence

**Persistent** – *incessant, continuous, and unrelenting, won’t let up*

Israel has continued in its Failure of Following God by Faith (They have failed to heed the warnings)

In **vs. 1-7** we saw the Parable of the Vineyard

In vs. **8-24** we saw the Peril Israel was in

Now in **vs. 25-30** we will see the Punishment for Israel’s Persistence

Their Persistent Failure to Follow / or Obey God

Last time we ended with **v. 25**, so I’d also like to open up this evening with that same verse

A typical Hebrew literary practice is to give the summary at the beginning, then follow with the details

This verse gives us the summary of the Punishment

**1.** The Rage of God

***“Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against His people”***

Divine wrath is involved in this punishment which means it will be severe

**2.** The Ruin by God

Two aspects of the Ruin are given here

-- The Trembling

**“*The hills did tremble”***

When God brings judgment upon someone, even the land trembles

This shows the power of Divine judgment

-- The Tearing

***“Their carcases were torn in... the streets”***

The bodies of the inhabitants of Judah would lie dead in the streets

It is a gruesome sight that sin has produced

**3.** The Relentlessness of God

Israel Persisted, but God’s Persistence is greater still

***“For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still”***

Divine mercy will be absent in this judgment

No pity will come from God

Though severe the judgment, mercy will not interfere

**Genesis 6:3** says – **“*My spirit shall not always strive with man”***

It seems Grace and Mercy have their limits

Let’s stand to read **vs. 26-30**

And think on this thought tonight

**“The Punishment of Persistence”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First let’s look at …

**I. THE “SOLICITATION” – v. 26**

***“And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss [whistle, signal] unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:”***

The Wrath of God against His own people was pending

because of their sin

But the Solicitation wasn’t to Israel to repent …

Rather, it’s a call to the Nations of the World to Come

The very hills of Judea will tremble at the coming judgment of God

The bodies of the inhabitants of Judah will end up lying dead in the streets

And with terrible foreboding, the announcement is made that there was more to come

As noted in the following five verses, the ultimate wrath of God against Judah would come at a later time

In **v. 26** we see God calling the nations to battle against the wicked Israelites

In graphic detail, the prophecy of **Zechariah 14:1, 2** is expanded upon

***“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee” “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city”***

While the fulfillment of this was in the near future, it is also talking about the distant future

Though Israel has been sorely chastised by the Gentile nations from times past

Never have All nations from the ends of the earth yet come against her

That will happen in the waning days of Jacob’s Trouble

**Revelation 16:14** speaks of the same

***“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”***

The nations of the whole earth under the flag ***(“ensign”)*** of the Antichrist will come up against Israel

One day God will use the Nations of the World to bring Israel to Himself

**THE “SOLICITATION”**

**II. THE “STRENGTH” - vs. 26-29**

I’d like to look at the following phrases in these verses

***“Come with speed … None shall be weary … nor the latchet of their shoes be broken … arrows are sharp … roaring shall be like a lion”***

The enemy nations which God has called to bring judgment upon the Israelites because of their sins will be powerful

Notice with me 4 aspects of their Strength

**A. ‘Swift’ – end of v. 26**

***“and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:”***

They will be able to mobilize and move with great speed

No longer does it take armies months to move from one position to another

But in most cases only a matter of days or maybe even hours

**Habakkuk 1:8 –** ***“Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat”***

**B. ‘Strong’ – v. 27**

Their mobility shows power / strength

***“None shall be weary … stumble … slumber … neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed”***

When the Bible tells us to ***“gird up the loins”* …**

**I Peter 1:13 –** ***“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”***

… It’s talking about getting ready for hard work or battle

(Illustrate the tunic being tucked into the belt around the waist)

It was the ancient way of saying “man up!”

They are tough, strong, agile, able to endure much

The enemy nations will not fail physically

Equipment failure will not occur

This is not a rag-tag army!

The point is that they will succeed in their appointment!

**C. ‘Supplied’ – v. 28**

***“Arrows are sharp … horses' hoofs like flint … their wheels like a whirlwind”***

They will have impressive armament

Think of the advancements in weapons today

Planes, laser guided bombs, radar & satellites

Their equipment will be excellent; they will have the best of technology

This makes them strong opponents for the Israelites

**D. ‘Scary’ – v. 29**

***“Their roaring shall be like a lion”***

They will be scary, frightening to Israel

The nations are pictured like a powerful lion

It is interesting that the lion's roar was designed to paralyze the panicked prey

(That’s where we get the phrase *scared stiff* from)

**Proverbs 30:30** tells us that the lion is *the king of the beasts*

So there will be no hope of escape

Their fierceness will make them a formable opponent

And give them added strength in their attack

The devil, their leader is described as such …

**I Peter 5:8 –** ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”***

**Joel 2:1-10** may well speak of the same judgment

During the last half of the Tribulation, the nations of the entire world will assemble in the plains of Jezreel beneath mount Megiddo in Israel’s North for a final, anti-Semitic invasion

Jerusalem will be captured and ravished

But, Praise God, He comes to their Rescue

**Isaiah 31:4 –** ***“For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me,***

***…Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof”***

**Revelation 19:11-15 …**

**THE “SOLICITATION”**

**THE “STRENGTH”**

**III. THE “SORROW” – v. 30**

***“And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof”***

We see a similar description in **Isaiah 8:22** …

***“And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness”***

**Psalm 79:1-5**

Advancing armies, roaring, uncaged lions, and ominous storm clouds are quite fear-provoking

What they see is descriptive of what the land looks like after this devastating destruction

Israel's situation is pictured as utterly hopelessness

This is what their God rejecting attitude and sinful behavior has wrought!

It’s notable that God offers no positive options which might allow them to escape their dire fate

The latter half of the Tribulation will be grim indeed

This punishment will be a dark time

It will bring much sorrow for the disobedient Israelites

Sin does not bring happiness, it brings sorrow!

This can sound pretty scary, depending on where you’re sitting

It all depends on what kind of fruit your ***“vineyard”*** is producing

Is it God’s kind of fruit, or just imitation wax fruit?

God is serious about finding the right fruit

If your life is nothing but a bunch of Sour Grapes,

They you’ve got something to worry about

But if you’ve come to the point where you’ve received Jesus’ forgiveness for your sins, then you’ve nothing to worry about

**CONCLUSION**

The final judgment and chastening of God against Israel will be poured out in that day

Yet, through it all, Israel will turn to their King and embrace Him as He soon returns in power and great glory

This awesome chapter of judgment against the accumulated sin of Israel is thus concluded

The prophet’s role, and each reader’s responsibility, is to warn others of God’s impending holy judgment and to persuade the ungodly to change their ways

Like Isaiah, preachers, teachers, and parents need to weep over the evil that pervades this world

It is especially sad when friends, neighbors, fellow workers, children, and fellow church members do not classify their evil deeds as sins against God

People need to communicate their deep sadness, explain the just demands of God, encourage people to humble themselves, and warn of irresistible judgment for those who do not glorify God

There is no hope for those who ignore, scorn, or reject God

One day the Almighty Lion of the Tribe of Judah will roar over them

**THE “SOLICITATION”**

**THE “STRENGTH”**

**THE “SORROW”**