

“THE JUDGMENT”

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...”
—ROMANS 1:24

During Isaiah’s ministry, the people of Israel and surrounding nations (Assyria, Babylon and Egypt among others), have alienated themselves from God. In chapters 13 to 23, Isaiah moves around the Middle East and pronounces God’s judgment on these nations. It makes for painful reading, full of warnings, terror and destruction.

Why are all these nations going to fall? The answer is a very important one. The principle of God’s judgment lies in the cause. The downfall of these nations is the natural consequence of their own inherent disposition, their attitude and actions. There is an intrinsic natural law at work in the world that is God-created and God-given; a natural moral law that is always seeking to correct ill and sin. God judging the nations is not Him coming down and saying, “Pow!” and wiping them off the face of the earth. It is a process in which their own sin has created the moral decay that inevitably causes them to collapse.

God’s moral laws are revealed in the Ten Commandments, but are also revealed in the human heart in conscience. We all have an inbred moral consciousness, which is not a result of conditioning, but is a basic requirement that reflects the moral character of God. These are not laws that we break and that’s the end of it, but they, in turn, break us, which is what lies behind the judgment of God.

When Paul writes, “Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts,” he is saying that if we are going to engage in sin, God

lets us go our own way and we bear the consequences. Engaging in sin creates within us an active virus that will spread and take its toll, not only on ourselves, but on others. Sin will never be our friend, and persistence in it will eventually destroy us.

This is what happened to Israel and surrounding nations. God gave them over to their sinful ways, which inevitably led to their downfall. The big picture, extremely relevant today, is that if we're not willing to bring our sin to God and confess it, it begins to consume and destroy us. We have one of two options; either hardening our hearts against God or allowing ourselves to be broken before Him and come to the cross of Christ. God has no goals of demise and destruction, but of redemption and restoration. He is love and His purpose in judgment is that our hearts be softened and turn to Him so that He can make our paths straight. It's in our humility and contrition that we are brought closest to the heart of God.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, keep me with a softened heart that always turns to you. Thank You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is there a persistent sin in my life that needs to be brought to the cross of Christ?