

## Unrighteous Decrees

*Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed*  
- Isaiah 10:1

Given today's corruption at all levels of society, especially within government, which affects the daily lives of all who come under its jurisdiction, it is easy to understand our text to be a warning against societal leaders who write laws that oppress the community. However, Isaiah addresses a higher need, that of eternal salvation and not that of temporal matters, by saying, woe unto those who *"turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!"* (Isaiah 10:2). Thus, the admonishment is primarily for corrupt spiritual leaders who obscure the way of salvation from those who are burdened by sin, but it is also a warning to us who naïvely look to man for spiritual guidance.

Of great concern, Isaiah says that there are many prophets in this world who honestly believe that they are teaching the truth when, in fact, they are not. Prophet Jeremiah calls them false prophets. Prophets in the sense that they speak about God but false prophets because God has not approved them: *"...The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart"* (Jeremiah 14:14). They teach from their own understandings and develop their well-intentioned but deceptive messages from other prophets: *"Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbor"* (Jeremiah 23:30). Hence, their teachings come from the very words that God has revealed to someone else but not from the words that God could have put into their mouth, which is the way it must be: *"...I will be with thy mouth, and teach what thou shalt say"* (Exodus 4:12).

And the more words they steal the better false prophets unwittingly become at deception, almost to the point of deceiving believers: *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"* (Matthew 24:24). Isaiah gave four examples of hearts that had sincerely searched for God: Needy, Poor, Widows, and Fatherless. All

portray those who have, by the grace of God, become penitent (burdened by sin) and fearful of eternal judgment. God created these penitent hearts through His Word (Law) and it is at this point that people either call upon God or turn their back on Him. Many turn to false prophets (man) who, in making their unrighteous decrees, sound very convincing in their use of scripture and stolen words but who never point solely to the mercy-seat where the gospel of forgiveness is preached (they often teach that to be saved one must not only come into faith, but must also obey the Mosaic Law - Acts 15:1, 5). God, on the other hand, directs all sin-sick souls, who turn to Him, to where Jesus can be found; in the heart of a believer. There confession can be made, forgiveness preached, and, by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, all past sins can be believed forgiven in Jesus' name and atoning blood. These individuals can then fully trust in the leading of the Holy Ghost without also trying to satisfy the Mosaic Law (Galatians 2:16) or some other imagination.

Why do people turn away from God? As it was with the false prophets, we today are prone to augment the living word of God (the Bible) with words from other sources and by our own good works. These "borrowed" words and self-righteous works dull our senses and spiritually confuse us. Apostle Paul describes why people prefer to listen to false prophets and not to the truth: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"*. Adam and Eve showed innate tendencies both to not listen to God and to try to achieve His blessing through their own effort; they ate the forbidden fruit. Mankind has inherited these same tendencies.

How do we know if we are being told the truth? Scripture tells us, *"...believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world...Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God..."* (1 John 4:1-3). Thus, each person is to prayerfully confirm all words that they hear and read against Scripture to ascertain that they address God's will—salvation through the blood of Christ. For those who insist on adding other requirements, God provides this warning: *"...what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which*

*shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?" (Isaiah 10:3).*

God is still calling all mankind to repent and believe the gospel, regardless of how great the sin, but time is running out!

God's Peace,  
Charles Korhonen

Church cleaning: Tom and Ruth Mackrain

Sunday school and Adult Bible Study 10am

Wednesday night Bible Study – 7pm

Mar 1	Ken Storm	Holy Communion
Mar 8	Nathan Ruonavaara	
Mar 15	Charles Korhonen	
Mar 22	Ivan Niemela	Potluck Meal following
Mar 29	Herb Jarvi	

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