

Good Morning Belfield Baptist Church Family and Friends.

Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Our devotion today is an outline of the message at Belfield Baptist Church for July 11, 2021.

Is America on Fire? Isaiah 9:18-21

How many of you have ever been near a fire that was raging uncontrollably? Fire is a scary thing; it consumes and destroys what it touches. The passage today is comparing the wrath of God to an angry flame.

In the Bible, we find wickedness compared to a fire. We understand the example. Isaiah used such a comparison. Look at Is. 9:18-20. ¹⁸

For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke. ¹⁹ Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. ²⁰ And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

This year we see wickedness burning like a flame across America.

Isaiah had witnessed the corruption and downfall of the Israelite people. He had seen the jaws of sinful pride sink her teeth into these great people. As he witnessed her downfall, he described what he saw as burning like a fire.

It is possible that the same fires which destroyed Israel may well be growing in the background in America. Let us examine God's word and think about the comparison for a few moments.

Let us look at four conditions that were present when God judged the nation of Israel. These conditions were present when the fires of judgment were ignited.

1. The first condition was a people filled with pride. Look at Is. 9: 9-10. ⁹And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, ¹⁰ The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.

God was sending judgment on the Israelite people.

- 1. They made two mistakes. First, they ignored the cause of the situation.**
- 2. Second, they arrogantly boasted that they would rebuild. It is as if they thought they did not need God.**

The Bible says: *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.* (Prov. 16:18 KJV)

The Bible tells us: I Pet. 5:5 KJV: *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* Prov. 29:23 KJV: *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

When we look at America, we see extremely proud people. We are proud of being Americans, but we are also arrogant toward other people in our world.

In addition, we are blind when bad things happen to us. We wander along showing little concern for the tragedies that strike us.

2. A second condition was internal confusion. Look at Is. 9:16. ¹⁶ For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.

*This concept is repeated Is. 9:19. **no man shall spare his brother.** This refers to chaos. Thus, there was poor leadership from their national leaders, confusion, and chaos among the people.*

3. A third condition was ignoring warning signs. When conditions are ripe for a forest fire, our forestry officials will issue warnings concerning the danger. They will discourage people from burning trash, building campfires or the like. When people neglect those warnings and build fires they are flirting with danger.

*Look at Is. 9:13. **For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.***

Have we gotten to the place where we do not heed the warnings of God's judgment?

*4. A fourth condition was a progressive worsening of wickedness. Look at Is. 9:18. **For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.***

In 1947, sociologist and historian Dr. Carle Zimmerman studied the deterioration and ultimate disintegration of various cultures. He found that in each society the disintegration of the culture was preceded by the disintegration of the family. He discovered 11 common elements that were always present.

Let us look at five of those eleven common elements:

- 1) An increase in rapid, easy, and "faultless" divorce.*
- 2) Fewer children, and less respect for parents and parenthood.*
- 3) A breakdown of most inhibitions against adultery.*
- 4) The rapid rise and spread of juvenile delinquency.*
- 5) Common acceptance of all forms of sexual perversion.*

What can we do?

- 1. We can pray and ask God to send a revival worldwide.*
- 2. We can get involved in serving God and having a Christian part in our nation.*

It is sad to realize and think about our nation and world moving away from God. As Christians, let us move forward, pray for forgiveness, and move back to the cross.

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