

Woe, Woe, Woe!

by David Courington

The prophet Isaiah knew the difference between good and evil. Not everyone in his day did, nor in ours. At God's instruction He pronounced woe upon them for their sins. There are three woes in the passage I want us to consider, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! 22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!" (Isaiah 5:20-23) (ESV) Then as now, some have their goods and evils mixed up. Evil has become so entrenched; many do not know the difference.

For example, instead of recognizing homosexual acts as sinful (See Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11); they are being celebrated in marriage. Some believe a marriage between a man and man or a woman and a woman, can be just as good as what God ordained between man and woman (Gen. 2:18-25). Divorcing for any cause and remarrying is no longer adultery. In the eyes of many to maintain such is the height of ignorance. But consider God's word, "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (Matt 19:9) Many will assert everyone has a right to enjoy a sexual relationship, regardless of marital status. Paul taught otherwise, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18.) Alas, bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.

The heart of the problem is identified in vs. 21, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" When men think their reasoning ability is greater than the God who created this universe, there is a serious problem that will lead to complete failure. As Paul said, "...the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:25) May we look to God for our sense of good and evil. Paul said the mature "have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:14)

Who are our heroes? Consider vs. 22-23 of our text, "Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!" We may call it "partying" or "Mardi Gras," but God calls it sin. When we place those on a pedestal who are least deserving of honor, woe, woe, woe! Things will not improve in our society until we go back to God's word to learn the difference between good and evil.

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