

Reaping the Whirlwind

Illustration

"A whirlwind is a vortex of wind that forms due to instabilities and turbulence created by heat and currents. It dissipates when its rotation is interrupted by an obstruction."

I. Spinning Away from God

"Israel has forgotten his Maker." (8:14)

A. Forgotten Him as the source of blessing

1. God made them great

*"Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel, like the first fruit on the fig tree."
{10:1}*

God delighted in Israel and anticipated fruitfulness in His covenant relationship with them. The grape vine and fig tree are symbols of security and prosperity.

2. Forgetful pride

"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land He has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe His commands...When all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt the land of slavery." (Deut 8:10-14)

B. Living life without reference to God

"You have trusted in your own ways." (10:15)

1. They've made God small

We know God, but functionally we can disregard Him.

"Israel knew God intellectually, but she had neglected Him by pushing Him aside. She had allowed other, lesser things to become central." (Boice, 64)

2. Suppressed truth

"That which is known about God is evident within them...For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made...For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom 1:19-21)

II. Sowing the Wind

*"Israel is a luxuriant vine; he produces fruit for **himself**. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he made; the richer his land, the better he made the sacred pillars."
(10:1)*

A. The multiplying power of sin

Based on multiplication of small compromises in obedience.

1. Multiplied altars - idolatry

Self centered religion

They claim to worship God, *"My God, we of Israel know you!" (8:2)* But there is a gulf between what they say and how they live. They credited their prosperity to idols, and as wealth increased, their resources were dedicated to the pagan cult.

"They are a fruitful vine whose produce has been put to bad use." (Hubbard, 162)

The exchange

The Calf of Samaria - using a tangible, finite symbol to represent the infinite, incorruptible God. They were manipulating 'god' to get what they really wanted.

"They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, birds and four-footed creatures." (Rom 1:23)

The enslavement

"They worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." (Rom 1:25)

Whatever we worship becomes our master. We think our reputation, appearance, achievements and possessions serve us, but we can be enslaved to keeping them up.

The change

"They consecrated themselves to things of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved." (9:10) Taking ritual vows of loyalty to Baal. They identify him as master. We become like what we worship. *(Ps 115:8)*

"Idols are the work of man's hands. Those who make them will become like them."

The freedom of true worship

Now: *"But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image." (2 Cor 3:18)*

Not yet: *"It has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like him because we will see Him just as He is." (1 John 3:2)*

2. Multiplied assets

Fortification

When God is small, fear is big. [Fear of God replaced by fear of man](#)

"[They] have multiplied fortified cities." (8:14) "trusted in the multitudes of [their] warriors," (10:13) "hired allies among the nations" (8:10) "and gone up to Assyria." (8:9)

Affluence and autonomy

"Israel believed success and prosperity was evidence of blessing - but their hearts became wrapped around their wealth, displacing God. (Hamilton)

Thinking big –more kings, palaces and sacred pillars. Trusting in God substitutes as the source of economic, political and spiritual security.

"Israel has forgotten His maker and built palaces." (8:14)

"He made kings but not from me, they set up princes, but I knew it not." (8:4)

B. Produced rotten fruit

"I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine?" (Jer 2:21)

1. False Heart

"Their heart is deceitful (10:2))." Literally smooth or slick, swearing false oaths.

A double-tongued person, who says one thing and does another.

"Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceitfully; with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor but in his heart he plans an ambush for him." (Jer 9:8)

2. Corrupt

"They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah. (9:9)

Gibeah – Judges 19; an incident revealing the depth of depravity in the nation of Israel.

"There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Jud 21:25)

III. Reaping the Whirlwind - Judgment

"Now he will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins." (8:13)

A. When God withdraws

1. Fruitlessness

"Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird -no birth, no pregnancy, no conception." (9:11)

A fitting judgment - God will eliminate the fruit that Israel depends on for continuance; the future generation of children.

"It is Yahweh's vital presence that makes possible the cycles of life: for him to withdraw is a sentence of death."(Hubbard, 166)

2. Scattered

"My God will cast them away because they have not listened to Him; and they will be wanderers among the nations." (9:17) He is the one who holds all things together.

B. Destruction

The eternal God will destroy the temporal things they trusted in.

1. Their wealth

"Now He will remember their iniquity and punish them for their sins...I will send fire on its cities that it may consume their palatial dwellings." (8:13,14)

2. Their shrines

"The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars... The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel will be destroyed." (10:2,7)

Their hope was misplaced like a "stick on the water" weightless, without direction. Derisive language points to the insignificance of impotent idols, who were mere sticks of wood, as well as their kings who speak with "worthless oaths" and have no real power.

C. Eternal effect of judgment

1. Running for cover

"Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, 'cover us!'" (10:8)

2. From the garden

"Thorn and thistle" is a reference to the curse for the sin of autonomy which began with Adam. Like Adam, our sin makes us want to hide from God.

3. Until the last day

"And they said to the mountains and the rock, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne.'" (Rev 6) Jesus quoted this

4. Is there hope?

"How can we stand in the face of our autonomous rebellion? To stand in God's judgment we need to be rained on. We need outside resources that we don't have and cannot achieve." (Hamilton)

IV. Showers of Righteousness

A. We Seek the Lord

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up the fallow ground. For it is time to seek the Lord.” (10:12)

Is this righteousness contingent on our sowing and seeking?

B. He sends the rain

1. Outside source

“Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.” (10:12)

2. From Jesus

The cross is where righteousness and steadfast love meet. We are covered by his righteousness so we don't have to take cover from God's righteous judgment.

3. He obstructed destruction

Jesus was the obstruction that absorbed the whirlwind of God's wrath. God's wrath is completely dissipated - it was entirely spent on Jesus.

4. Reversal

We won't be cut off – Jesus was cut off in our place.

Our iniquity is covered – God will *“remember our sins no more.” (Heb 8:12)*

“In the New Covenant God can remember me but forget my sin.” (Hamilton)

C. The Luxuriant Vine

1. Jesus

“I am the true vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

2. The Father

“My Father is the vinedresser and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.” (John 15:1) God is the gardener of our souls, who breaks up the fallow ground of our stony hearts.

3. The Fruit

As we soak up the steadfast love from the vine, we will bear its fruit. *“Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15)*

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