

Can America Escape Judgment (transcript)

Can America Escape Judgment?

Isaiah 1:4

preached by Rev. James R. Reynolds, Sr. at Deliverance Center on Sunday Morning December 5, 2004

I have entitled this message in the form of a question, "Can America Escape Judgment?" I trust I will be able to help you to understand the answer.

I want to read one verse of Scripture to you from the first chapter of Isaiah—verse four:

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Isaiah is talking here about the nation of Israel wandering far away from the precepts and the commandments of God. They turned their back upon the God that rescued them from slavery.

Can America hope to escape judgment committing the same sins that brought judgment on the nation of Israel?

I. The Privileges of the Nation — vs. 2

Let us take a look at the privileges Israel enjoyed. What a privileged nation Israel was! In verse 2, he says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt where they were driven by hard taskmasters. They were driven to the point that they even were commanded to worship the false gods of Egypt. Not only did they serve the Egyptians, working laboriously in their fields and building such structures as the pyramids, but also they worshipped the false gods of Egypt. But, God in His grace reached out and raised up a deliverer and brought them out of bondage and set them free from slavery. God not only brought them out of bondage and set them free from slavery, but He brought them into a land that flowed with milk and honey. He blessed that nation. Listen again to what he says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children..." Israel was taken from slavery and brought to an exalted position amongst the nations. If you have read the book of Isaiah then you would know, at this time in her history, Israel was feared by the other nations. One whole nation came and tricked Israel into accepting them because they feared them.

America, like Israel, has been exalted to a high position. You must understand that we are not only exalted as far as finances, but we have been exalted to a position where all nations fear our country. Even this is beginning to change.

I have nourished. The Hebrew word translated as "nourished" in this verse has in it the idea of advancement. God brought them out of slavery and brought them into a beautiful land, and He began to advance them in every phase of life. "Advanced, increased, prospered." Israel was a very prosperous nation at one time. There was not a king or kingdom that ever had what Solomon had, but it was because of the richness of the nation itself that Solomon had such a great kingdom. The Queen of Sheba came and spoke to Solomon: "I had surely thought they were exaggerating when they told me of your glory and of all of your pomp and of all of the arrangements of your sitting captains and lords and your position and your wisdom. I thought probably they had exaggerated, but when I saw all the wealth and the beauty and the glory and the grandeur, I knew the half was never yet told me." Israel and America haven been blessed of God. I have nourished—advanced,

increased, prospered—and brought up children. He raised them and fed them like a mother feeds her child giving him nourishment. Not only did he nourish and feed them, but also He protected them. Every time Israel went on the battlefield, they never lost a battle, except, when they were sinful.

Isaiah 18:2 says that Israel was a nation terrible from their beginning. What does that mean? Nations feared us. Israel was a nation terrible from its beginning. God's grace is what made Israel great—God's grace! It was not that they were any wiser than other nations, but it was because of the fact of God's grace coupled with God's covenant with Israel that she became the great nation that she was. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, and I have a feeling that God is remembering some things—not altogether good things—concerning America, but the people ought to realize that God has been good to this nation

The measure of opportunity is the measure of responsibility. Surely, we have been blessed, we have been prospered, and we have been protected. How many wars have been fought with other nations in this country? One, but it won't be long until that is changed. You can mark it down, and you can say that Pastor Reynolds said it. It will not be long before America will face a war on her homeland. Surely, we have had great opportunity, and that, in turn, brings great responsibility. Israel imagined themselves to be elected to the privileges and the blessings, but they forgot their responsibility and in forgetting their responsibility they lost their privileges.

The measure of grace is the measure of judgment. Judgment is according to privilege. The greater the light (understanding) a person has, the greater the requirement. The preachers argued this morning on the radio that our country really was never a Christian nation though it has been called that. No. Our country was a Christian nation and was proud of it. Our past countrymen had no fear to stand up for what they believed. We have watched the enemy slowly undermining the very roots and foundation of our country. It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. [Matthew 10:15] Does that not include America?

I considered William Branham to be a great prophet. I do not understand what happened at the end of his ministry, but at one time William Branham walked with God. He knew more of the Spiritual world than most people know of the natural world. In 1956, he made this statement at the Bangor auditorium, "If God doesn't judge America, He will have to raise up Sodom and Gomorrah and apologize to them." You say, "Is that some kind of a joke?" No. That is no joke. That is simply the facts. We are a wicked nation. How corrupt are we?

II. The Corruption of the Nation — vs. 3-6

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Isaiah is talking about the nation that God brought out of slavery and brought to a land that is known as the "Promised Land"—a land flowing with milk and honey.

Taking you quickly to the scene that this verse comes out of: Here is a nation that has corrupted itself to the degree that it is corrupting others. God called them in the first place to be a witness for Him, but they became a nation that corrupted others. In Isaiah's time, gold and silver idols lined the streets in Jerusalem. Did you hear what I said? Gold and silver IDOLS lined the streets in Jerusalem, and Israel was by the royal authority commanded to worship the sun and the moon. You ought to thank God that your president is not commanding you to worship the sun and moon. They kept pure white horses at the gate of the temple in stalls that were well-fed and cared for, and at the beginning of each new season, these horses would prance out with gold all over their harnesses hauling golden chariots to meet the rising of the sun. A nation that was called of God and that was commanded by God "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me" has now begun to worship the sun, the moon, and other false idols. Tell me, America has not done the same? Some of the great idols of our time come right out of Hollywood. Hollywood is full of some of the most corrupt people that have ever existed. Corruption is facing the nation everywhere you look. Israel—who was called "God's People"—is found here worshipping the sun and the moon! God even called them saying, "You are My Children. I brought you up and you are my people. I've watched over you. I've kept you." Here they are: a city that was called the holy city worshipping idols, worshipping the sun, worshipping the moon, and worshipping false gods. The streets of Jerusalem were filled not only with idols, but also with altars. And on these altars was placed incense so that it was like prayer going up to their false gods. I will not tell you at what meeting it was because I know that some people would stay right there and not hear the rest of what I am going to say, but there was an internationally-known evangelist in 1956, who asked an atheist to pray in his meeting. Can you tell me that an atheist is going to pray to a God that he does not believe in? Something has gone wrong somewhere.

Not only were they corrupt outside, but they were also corrupt inside the temple; they had orgies in the temple. They had some wicked "goings on" in the temple. It has not changed a whole lot. I just picked up the paper yesterday and it said that about 100 million dollars was being paid because of priests attacking little children. The Roman Catholic Church had already paid out some 80 million dollars for that group down in Boston for their attacks on children. How much more will they pay? They made this statement, "You'll not deplete our coffers." Listen, we are living in a time when people are more concerned with the dollar bill than the God that is stamped on the dollar bill! It should be IN GOD WE TRUST! Has anyone noticed that I am a bit upset? Oh, yeah, I hate the devil. I hate what he is doing. I hate what he

has done to you. I hate what he is doing to you. I hate the lies that he has told you. If you were on the streets of Jerusalem while these beautiful white stallions pranced out to greet the sun as it rose and while incenses rose off the altars and through the streets of Jerusalem, then you would not have to listen real hard to hear the screams and cries of the children that were being cast into the fire to the god they called Moloch. They burned their children! You say, "Well, we don't burn children." Dear God, they do not even give them a chance to be born! Do not tell me they do not have life and that they do not have feeling. The most hideous, the most terrible crime that a person can commit is against an innocent soul. They were throwing them into the fires. It has not changed. The same devil that inspired them to destroy children is the same devil that is behind this abortion scene. You say, "I don't like your preaching, Brother Reynolds." I know. I have been told that a lot of times, but at least when I stand before God, I will stand innocent of not telling the truth.

Let us look at the sting of sin. Isaiah sums it all up in this statement, They have forsaken the Lord. After all of the terrible things that they have done, they have now forsaken God.

In Isaiah chapter one and verse three, we see the error of ingratitude. Despite exceptional privileges, Israel and America have lowered themselves beneath the level of the beast—the ox. God is presenting the ox as having more sense than the nation of Israel. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. The evolutionists would like to bring man down on the level of beasts, but sin brings man under the level of beasts. Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider—they were ignorant of how blessed they really were.

We see, also, their incorrigibility. Verses 4 and 5 say, Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? (GOD is asking the question!) Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. No matter what God did to them by His grace and by His judgment to turn them around, they continued to go their own way! They would not change! Yes, I now that a lot of people got excited when 911 took place. It seemed like everyone was concerned about going to church. As you traveled down the streets you would read sign after sign stating, "IN GOD WE TRUST." I saw a great, big, beautiful sign and it said, "In GOD is Our Trust." They say the churches were packed for a few weeks, but since that time, if you have been listening to the news and the reports that have been coming forth, you will find that this nation is revolting more and more and more. The sad thing about it is that the president gets all the guff. Who was it that put those federal judges in that are making decisions for accepting the marriages of people of the same sex? God have mercy on the state of Massachusetts. No matter what, they will revolt more and more. They are increasing in degeneracy; they are going down all the time. Look at verse six. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Again, look down at verse twenty-one, How is the faithful city become an harlot! "How did you turn into the corrupt nation that you are? I've brought you out. I've blessed you and I have provided for you. I prospered you. Now, you've become a harlot." The holy city that this is referenced to is Jerusalem, the Holy City. Prostitution is supported greatly in our country. Did you know that it would not take long to clean up our land if only the judges, when they get them into the courtroom, would give some hard sentences? Israel became a harlot. Do not tell me that America is any different from Israel.

Not only were they corrupt in their dealings with one another and in their dealings with God, but they were corrupt in their justice system. Verse twenty-three says, Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. They are only concerned about money. Did you know that you could commit murder today and if you have enough money you can get by with it? You say, "How do you know that?" Well, it was not too long ago when we had a scene in the court for months played like a soap opera over the television waves. I did not watch it; I did not want to watch it. I did not have any time to watch it, but I heard a lot about it and that man walked away free. Oh, yes, I know he lost some money, but He had enough, so, he did not have to worry too much. Money buys more than things. Now, I do not want to get onto the subject of some of the officials in our country, because you would get hung up there, but I will mention one thing. I know that a lot of people still believe that some of our political leaders were great men, but if you would read their backgrounds, then you would see that they were "corrupters." What a statement that is made in verse twenty-three: Princes (that is the dignitaries; those that are in high office) are... companions of thieves. When I was in the United States Marine Corps, I once borrowed a car without asking permission, and I ended up paying a lot of money because of it. I could have been thrown out of the Service, but in His grace and through my mother's prayers, God did not allow that to happen. While I was still in the Newbern Jail, my captain came to see me and he said to me, "If you can get out, we won't prosecute you. Do whatever you have to do to get out." When I got back to the station, my captain said to me, "Now, look Reynolds, you did a very foolish thing going out there and borrowing somebody's car without permission. Don't you realize the price that you paid?" (It did cost me a lot of money, but it could have cost me more.) He said, "Now, if you want to go and rob a bank, I will go with you if the price is right." I want people to know that I'm not for sale! I am not for sale! I do not know if that means anything to you, but I want you to understand I am not for sale! I know people have given me things and thought maybe that I would ease up a little bit, but I am not interested on easing up on sin. I want to help you, but at the same time I do not want to ease up on sin because sin is destructive. Can you honestly tell me that our justice system is doing well?

Money and color buy a lot in the courtrooms today. If you have money, you can get by with most anything, and if your color is right, they hardly dare to touch you. I was in a courtroom once trying to help somebody else that had gotten themselves into some trouble. While I was waiting for their time to be prosecuted, there was a white young lady that was called down to the bar, and the judge read off the crime that she had committed. She had taken something from a store. I think the item she stole had a value of \$41. It was her first offense in all of her life, and she was given six months probation and \$250 fine. Almost immediately after that there was a colored girl that stood before the judge and the accusation was made against her for stealing hundreds of dollars worth of goods. This was the seventh time that she had been in the

courtroom. The judge did not give her probation. He only gave her a very small fine and told her that she was free to go. I thought to myself that is the reason why we are in the mess that we are in. You say, "You are against colored folks." I am not against colored folks. Color means nothing to God, but what I am trying to tell you is that the justice system is messed up and God is displeased. When a man commits a crime, he needs to pay for it. If a man is not guilty, he ought to be able to go free.

III. The Results of their Corruption — vs. 7-8

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. The judgment of God follows sinful activity. Can I say that again? The judgment of God follows sinful activity. Will America get by with what Israel was judged for?

An enemy ravaged Israel. Notice the term he uses here, "strangers devour it." Where? "Right in your presence." There are a lot of things going on today that people are not even aware of. Strangers overthrew Israel. That is, a foreign nation came in and overturned their country, burned their temple, confiscated their goods, and carried many of them off into slavery. WHY? Because they became sinful and forgot God.

"As a cottage." Why is that statement made? "As a cottage in a vineyard." If you would look in the Hebrew you would find that the word cottage has more of the idea of a "booth." These booths were thrown together very quickly during the time of the vines producing their fruit. There were watchmen that stayed or guards or gardeners that stayed in these booths watching over the vineyard while the vines were producing, but as soon as the crop came to fruition, as soon as there was a harvest, they left those little booths and it was not long before those booths began to fall down. God is using that phrase in the sense of their ability to protect themselves. "You're like a vineyard that is being watched over by a booth that will soon fall."

We are talking about Israel in comparison to our country. "We are so prosperous," you might say. Things are going to get worse, folks! There are many businesses closing up and hundreds of jobs being lost because of corruption in our own state. Jordan's meat place closed up causing a loss of about 200 jobs. Hundreds of jobs across the state have been lost and they are blaming President Bush for it. Who is responsible for this state? (The Governor) And it is not just the Governor's fault, but it is the fault of the Democrats that have been in control of this state for so long and have raised the taxes higher and higher. Maine is the highest taxed state in the country. Tell me that these companies and these businesses want to stay where they are being so highly taxed? To top it all off, we have so many people on the other end of the totem pole saying, "Oh, they are giving all the money and all the breaks to the rich." No, they are trying to help them stay in business! The federal government has only allowed these businesses to keep a little more of their own money that they have earned. The government is not giving them anything.

IV. Their Insincere Efforts to Obtain Mercy — vs. 11-15

Amongst all of this, they are insincere in their efforts to attain mercy. Please listen to what I am going to say. If you have not heard anything before now, just listen to what I am about to say. While they are taking part in all of this idolatry, they are at the same time reaching out to God. Look at verse eleven down through to verse 15. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? "Your filthy lifestyle has been treading in my courts. It is no wonder that Jesus went into the temple and overthrew the changers of money using a scourge to drive them out. "You made my Father's house a house of merchandise! It should be a house of prayer." There they are in the courts of the house of God with their feet that are filled with evil. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. That is, "You are going up to the house of God and committing sin." God says, "I don't want it." Psalm 50 and verse 13, Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Those things do not satisfy Him. To what purpose are your sacrifices? Verse 15, And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. "To what purpose...?" He asked. "What do you think your doing?" is what He is saying, Do you know that this morning across our land and probably around the world in places of worship, people have gathered and they sing songs to the Lord, but hardly before the night will end some of them will be doing the same thing they did last week?

God is looking for obedience, and not insincere sacrifice or form or ritual. God wants your heart! Verse 19 says, If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: What is God looking for? He is looking for us to obey. Does not the Scripture say to obey is better than sacrifice? Here they are sacrificing bullocks, lambs, and rams and God is saying, "I don't want it. Away with it!" What is God after? He is after the heart. Now, when I hear people say, "In the Old Testament, they brought the blood of rams and lambs and it washed away their sins." No, the blood of an animal never washed away anyone's sins. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that washes away a man's sins. As I have

said so many times, they looked forward to the cross, we look back to it. The blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious for their sin and ours, and His blood is the only means of atonement. God wants devotion of heart from us. Obedience pleases God. God is looking for obedience. "Oh, all you got to do is mouth a few pious platitudes." That is a lie folks! "As long as you go to church once in a while and do the best you can, you will be all right." That will split hell wide open! You have to obey God in order to please Him.

V. There is Only One Way of Escape — vs. 16-18

Coming down to this: There was only one way of escape for Israel (and they did not escape) and there is only one escape for America. Will we escape? Will America escape judgment after committing the same sins as Israel? Verses 16-18 Wash you.... "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. Sinners plunge beneath that flood and loose all their guilty stains." There is only one place where your sins can be washed away and that is at the cross. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. There is only one thing that can wash away the sins that are scarlet, that are red like crimson, and that is the blood that issued down from the Son of God. Life flowed out of Him, so that life could flow into us.

"Come now..." I know that this has been used many times as an evangelistic message to individuals, but if you will take notice, the context and setting helps us to better understand the text. God has been dealing with a nation that is wicked, ungodly, and have turned away from Him and have gone their own way. He is speaking to this people, Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. One hope for America is that they would call on the Lord, but I am here to tell you this morning that I have read of some very serious indictments against people that have sinned like our country has and they did not escape judgment.

I do not want to leave you on that note, but we will take a look at one verse just to try to help you to see that in the midst of it all there is the grace of God. Going back to verse nine, Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. What do you mean? We should have been as Sodom and like unto Gomorrah? The flames of God's wrath destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and here the prophet is saying, "We would have been like them if it hadn't been for a remnant." The people that are in public office today that are criticizing the church and the Believer, bringing accusations against them, and are telling rotten lies about them that live right ought to be thankful for that remnant. Now, I know that there is a lot of foolishness going on. When the sons of God came together, the devil came, also. Expect it, folks. We hear people say, "Oh, there are hypocrites in the church." There are hypocrites out there everywhere you go! The world is filled with them, but at least there is a remnant! God has kept his hand upon some that refuse to go the way that Israel went and the way that America as whole is going, but will stand up and say, "I WILL NOT GO THAT WAY!" It is because of that kind of people that America has not yet been judged. In 1975, my mother asked me, "James, why hasn't God judged America?" It is because of a remnant. We would have been like Sodom; we would have already tasted the wrath and judgment of God if it had not been for a remnant.

That little skirmish that happened down there in New York was nothing compared to what could have happened, and probably what will eventually happen. Some of you may have heard about Dimitri Dudeman. He was considered to be a prophet that heard from God. He said that he was carried by some kind of a conveyance over a city and an angel spoke to him and said, "Do you know what this is?" Being from another land, Mr. Dudeman did not know what city it was. The angel said, "This is Los Angeles: Sodom and Gomorrah. It will burn." The angel took him to another place that I believe was Las Vegas. The angel asked him again, "Do you know what this place is? Just as before, Mr. Dudeman did not know. The angel said, "This is Las Vegas: Sodom and Gomorrah. It will burn." The angel then took him over Florida, and, again, the angel asked him, "Do you know what this is?" He answered, "No." The angel said, "This is Florida: Sodom and Gomorrah. It will burn." The angel finally took him over New York City, declaring the same words of judgment over her. Now, this is a man that paid a great price to walk with God. He is gone on, now, but he left behind him a message that says, "America will burn if it does not accept Christ."

Now, we have not burned, yet, because of a remnant. Did you know that God said that he would not have destroyed even Sodom and Gomorrah if He had found ten righteous people? His mercy is because of the remnant. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. It will not be long before the remnant is taken out of this world. Do you understand what I am saying to you? When God takes out the remnant, he that now hinders will hinder until he is taken out of the way and then all hell will break lose. The world ought to be thanking God for the Christian instead of degrading them and cursing them. The remnant is the one thing that is keeping the judgment of God back! I do not know about you, but I do not want to be here when God's wrath is poured out. In order for us to escape it is still just like it was for them: you will escape only if you are willing and obedient—WILLING and OBEDIENT. Many, many times I have stood behind this desk and said these same words to you time and time again, Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. [Luke 21:36] "If you are willing..." You say, "Well, I'm willing." It does not stop there, but verse nineteen says if you are "willing and obedient." How many want to stand with the Son of man? Some will escape and the means is: a life committed to the Christ

who shed his blood. It is not enough just to mouth some words saying, "Jesus is my savior." Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [Matthew 7:21]

Judgment is coming! Mark it down. You can call me a false prophet and you can call me a prophet of doom, but I have read this Book and I have read It well and I understand that the God that brought judgment on Israel will not turn his back on judgment on America because America has not only committed the sins that Israel committed, but has aggravated those sins to a higher level. God is holding off judgment because He is waiting for the remnant. God's remnant today holds back judgment, but that remnant will soon be taken out of the way, and when that remnant is taken out, God will bring judgment. I want to be amongst them that are taken out.

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