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Woe to Those Who Draw Sin With Cords of Deceit

5: 18-19

Woe to those who draw sin with cords of deceit DIG: Who gets hit with the third woe and why? In today's images, how would you describe what they are doing with these cords of deceit? What sarcasm do you hear between the lines?

REFLECT: Who do you know that is tied down with cords of deceit and wickedness? Being spiritually blinded, how can you help them? Praying for them is probably the most effective means of intercession. Make a "Top Ten" list of people to pray for and then commit to pray for them on a consistent basis. The prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective (James 5:16). What deliberate choices are you making right now in your life? Do you think you could be taking your relationship with God for granted?

In the six woes of **Isaiah (5:8-25)**, the first two **therefore** sections subdivide **5:8-17** from **5:18-25**. The bitterness of the wild grapes is revealed even more than before, for here **Isaiah** exposes the underlying cynicism that was responsible for **the people's** refusal to live in obedience to their **God**. **They** did not believe that **ADONAI** was in control of all things, and they believed that **they** were really more capable of determining right from wrong than **He**. This resulted in a perversion of values in their society: debauchery was more honorable than purity, and drunkenness was preferable to sobriety. The wicked were pronounced innocent, while the righteous were condemned.

Far from being convicted of the charges against **them (5:13-17)**, **they** mocked both **Isaiah** and **his Creator**, saying: **Let God hurry, let Him hasten His work** out in the open **so we may see it (5:19a)**. **They** believed that **the Temple** would never be violated. After all, **they** thought, **ADONAI** had given **them** the priesthood, **the Temple** and the Land. Were **they** not the apple of **His** eye? Hadn't **He** said **He** would always be with **them**? Later, during the ministry of **Jeremiah**, the Levites would actually walk within **the Temple** complex, repeating in vain repetition: **This is the Temple of ADONAI, the Temple of ADONAI, the Temple ADONAI** (see the commentary on [Jeremiah, to see link click Cc - False Religion is Worthless](#)), actually thinking that **they** could merely remind **the LORD** that it was indeed **His Temple**, kind of a good luck charm, even though **they** were

practicing idolatry right in **the Temple** itself (**Ezekiel 8:1-16**)! **They** had taken **their** relationship with **YHVH** for granted; **they** had confused **Ha'Shem's** kindness and mercy with weakness. **They** thought **God** would merely wink at **their** sin because **He** loved **them** so much.

If you didn't know better, it would seem that **they** were daring **God** to punish **them**! **They** said: **Let it approach, let the plan of the Holy One of Isra'el come, so we may know it (5:19b)**. **Their** use of **Isaiah's** phrase, **the Holy One of Isra'el**, was hardly an acceptance of what the title means, but rather a way of taunting **Isaiah** and ridiculing what **they** perceived to be **his** "holier-than-thou" attitude.



To this, **Isaiah** responds with **a third woe**, declaring: **Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit and wickedness, as with cart ropes (5:18)**. Earlier, **Isaiah** accused the wealthy of drinking an excessive amount of **wine** at **their banquets (5:11)**. But more importantly **they** had **no respect for the work of ADONAI (5:12)**. There, **Isaiah** had charged **them** with being so intoxicated with seeking pleasure that **they** had shut **God** out of **their** lives. But when **the prophet** confronted **them** with **their** sin, instead of being convicted about it, **they** mocked **him**.

They are pictured as pulling **sin** to themselves with ropes by making deliberate choices. This was no accident. **They** did not fall into it, but were consciously choosing evil over righteousness. **The Israelites** were proud of **their** unbelief, but it was like a yoke by which **they** were harnessed to the wagon of **sin**. So when **God** punished the wagon, **they** were punished with it. **They** demanded **ADONAI** act before **they** would believe. But there is never enough evidence for unbelief. Only when faith is offered freely, are **God's** acts able to confirm that faith (**Hebrews 11**).