

## ISAIAH 1:21-31    LEST YOU BE AS DROSS

<sup>21</sup> See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her— but now murderers! <sup>22</sup> Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. <sup>23</sup> Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah, I will get relief from my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. <sup>25</sup> I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. <sup>26</sup> I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."

<sup>27</sup> Zion will be redeemed with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness. <sup>28</sup> But rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish.

<sup>29</sup> "You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced because of the gardens that you have chosen. <sup>30</sup> You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. <sup>31</sup> The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire."

Every parent knows the tension and struggle that is found perfectly in God. It is the pain of a love that experiences those moments of healthy relationship, projects them into the future, and then has their promise dashed by rebellion and disobedience. We have a God who loves us so much that he laments over our moral failures. Furthermore, in his perfect love, God cannot remove the consequences of our rebellion. If his promises are to be true, then his justice must be also. So God attacks the sin rather than the consequences of sin. He promises to *thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.*

So, how is it that those who forsake the Lord will parish? Life experience shows us that a person becomes whatever is the controlling power in his life. We call them addictions, and think most often of alcohol and drugs. However, one can be addicted to television, work, family, sports, hobbies, movies, exercise, even counseling. Sometimes seriously and at other times jokingly, we describe such people as \_\_\_\_\_aholics. By doing so we inadvertently acknowledge that a person becomes what he "worships." God's message through the Prophet is that if you persist in sin you become sin and will be part of what is purged or destroyed.

**Dear God, thank you for purging me of the necessity of living in sin by sending your Son to take sin upon himself and destroy it on the cross. Enable me to repent of my devotion to anything other than you. Purge me of my sin that I might no longer cause you pain. Amen.**