

THROUGH THE BIBLE

ISAIAH 1-3

Let me start with some humor... “*Did you know that atheism is a non-prophet association?*” *Yet that sure was wasn't the case with the ancient Hebrews!*

Throughout Israel's history God sent men called “*prophets*” to convey His will to His people. Prophets had *a spiritual calling, a steely courage, and a Spirit-inspired message*. Priests received their office by virtue of their pedigree. But God picked and appointed His prophets. They were His spokespeople to the nation.

Think of a prophet as God's bullhorn. He trumpeted God's message. The prophet was pointed and candid.

He spoke a timely word to a targeted audience.

Usually his message was a blend of *punishment and promises*. He spoke of the *need to repent and the promise of God's restoration*. Ultimately, all the Hebrew prophets looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

Israel will sin - and will be judged. But the people's sin won't ultimately thwart God's purposes. Messiah will come to restore and renew. The Savior will usher in God's eternal kingdom and fulfill all His promises.

The Hebrew prophets were divided into two categories – *writing prophets* and *non-writing prophets*.

For example, Elijah and Elisha were prominent OT prophets, yet as far as we know they wrote no books.

Among writing prophets they're also two divisions: **major** and **minor**. The *Major Prophets* are five... Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations (also written by Jeremiah), Ezekiel, and Daniel... There are 12 *Minor Prophets*.

The distinction between *major* and *minor* has nothing to do with content. **The Minor Prophets pack a major message.** The designation is all about bulk. Major Prophets are "*major*" simply because of their size.

And of the Major Prophets, Isaiah, is known as "**The Prince of the Prophets.**" His ministry lasted longer, his style was more eloquent, his message more sweeping than his peers. His writing reveals an educated mind.

Isaiah ministered in Israel for 60 years. He served God through the reign of four kings - from 740-680 BC.

Hebrew tradition tells us that Isaiah was a man of rank. He was a member of the royal court. It informs us Isaiah was a cousin of the southern king, Uzziah.

And Isaiah's name reflects his message. "**Isaiah**" means "**Jehovah is Salvation.**" No other prophet or prophesy depicts as vividly the coming of King Jesus.

Isaiah predicts *His virgin birth, His character, His motivations, His life, His miracles, His death, His resurrection, His second coming, His future Kingdom.*

Isaiah has been called "**The Fifth Gospel.**" This book is quoted more times in the NT than any other prophet.

It's interesting there are 66 chapters in Isaiah and 66 books in the Bible. Isaiah's first 39 chapters speak of God's Law and Judgments. The last 27 chapters speak of God's Grace and Salvation toward Israel.

It's ironic, the OT is made up of 39 books that speak of God's Law and judgment. The NT consists of 27 books about His Grace and salvation... It's as if the book of Isaiah is a [mini-Bible](#). The message of the whole Bible is packed into this one book of Isaiah.

Verse 1, [“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”](#)

After the reign of King Solomon, the Hebrew nation became embroiled in a Civil War. The northern ten tribes succeeded. They became known as [“The Kingdom of Israel.”](#) Their capitol was Samaria.

The southern two tribes remained faithful to King Solomon's rightful heir, Rehoboam. [“The Kingdom of Judah”](#) maintained *Jerusalem* as its capitol.

Isaiah ministered to the southern kingdom, before and after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

And it was a troublesome time...

The king on the throne, Uzziah, was a good and godly man. He reigned 52 years, 792-740 BC. His obedience to God created a stability and a prosperity.

For the next 18 years Uzziah's son, Jotham, followed in his father's footsteps. But Jotham's successor, Ahaz, rebelled. His 19 years of idolatry set the nation of Judah on a collision course with God's judgment...

And God's means of discipline came in the form of the ferocious, bloodthirsty, brutal Assyrian army.

Today even secular folks recognize the name “Isaiah.” But unless you’re a scholar in ancient Eastern civilization, names like “*Tiglath-pileser*,” “*Shalmaneser*,” “*Sargon*,” “*Sennacherib*” are probably meaningless. To us, they sound like names from the latest video game.

Yet in the late 8th century BC these were the names that dominated world headlines. Turn on CNN and these were the guys being discussed by Wolf Blitzer.

These ruthless Assyrian kings were bent on conquest, and expansion, and world domination.

Isaiah lived in the shadow of this Assyrian threat.

In 734 BC, early in Isaiah’s ministry, *Tiglath-pileser* drove his Assyrian army into Northern Israel. He sacked its villages and deported its people.

Thirteen years later, in 722 BC, his successor, *Shalmaneser*, laid siege to Israel’s capitol, Samaria.

His son, *Sargon*, finished sacking Samaria - and the kingdom of Israel - and took her inhabitants captive...

A few years later his successor, *Sennacherib*, drove his army further south, and pillaged the suburbs of northern Jerusalem, surrounding the city in 701 BC.

For 40 years Isaiah had heard the Assyrian train rumbling down the tracks - getting closer to a collision.

The mission God had given him was to warn Judah and Jerusalem that unless the nation repented, they’d suffer the same plight as their sinful sister, Israel.

Isaiah writes in verse 2, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me...” For over 700 years, since He brought Israel out of Egypt, God had parented his people. He was a loving, patient Father. *He provided, and taught, and spanked.* Yet the Jews chose to rebel.

And God tried it all... He punished with famine. He rewarded the nation with prosperity (*as in the days of Uzziah.*) Neither worked, God’s people constantly bucked at His will. After awhile, *what’s a parent to do?*

Verse 3, “The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” The term “*crib*” means “*feed trough.*” An ox wanders until it gets hungry, then it comes home.

Recently, modern Israeli police in the city of Haifa used this verse to track down a smuggling ring that was using ox-drawn carts to transport stolen goods...

After capturing some of the oxen they were made to go hungry for several days; then let loose. And just as Isaiah predicted they headed straight for their Master’s crib. They led police to the smuggler’s hide-out.

You’ve heard the expression “*dumb as an ox?*” Well, some folks are *dumber than an ox.* They get hungry spiritually, yet rather than head to the Master’s crib, and feed on Jesus - they turn to pills, or booze, or sex, or sports. They make the age-old mistake of trying to quench *a spiritual thirst with a physical pleasure.*

Faith realizes we’ll find our *feed* at the Master’s *feet.*

Next time you’re bored or lonely or depressed, don’t run off to your *girlfriend’s crib,* or your *homey’s crib...* like a smart ox take your heart to *the Master’s crib.*

Verse 4 “Alas, sinful nation, a people laden (or loaded) with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters!” God is not mincing words. “They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward.”

If you're not pursuing God you're headed backwards.

Recall the wonderful promise of Jesus in Matthew 11:28. Jesus invites us, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Sin weighs you down. It's Jesus that lightens your load.

Isaiah's favorite title for God appears in verse 4, “*the Holy One of Israel.*” Of the 31 times this phrase appears in the Bible, it's used 26 times in Isaiah.

It speaks of God's impeccable purity. And in light of His holiness, it makes Israel's sin is that much more deplorable. They had insulted “*the Holy One.*”

I like Phillip Yancey's comment on God's dealings in the OT. “Jehovah does not think like a social worker. He behaves, instead, like a holy God trying desperately to communicate to cantankerous human beings.”

A righteous God gets angry. He vents His frustration. He's not always delicate or diplomatic. God is “*the Holy One of Israel*” and He despises His people's sin.

In verse 5 Isaiah asks, “Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.” Hey, “there's a fine line between stubborn and stupid.” I've met a lot of smart people whose stubbornness nullified their brilliance. They ended up no better than stupid.

And this was Israel... They revolted time and again even though God faithfully disciplined them each time.

It's said, "True stupidity is making the same mistake over and over, while expecting a different result."

Isaiah adds, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment." Judah is still licking its wounds from their last divine spanking - yet they have persisted in their sin and rebellion.

The nation won't even give itself a chance to heal.

Never forget Hebrews 12:6 "Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives."

If you're a child of God expect a spiritual spanking from time to time. The Lord disciplines His kids.

Verse 7 "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah."

Ten of Israel's 12 tribes - the northernmost tribes - had been wiped out by the Assyrians. Only a remnant - just two tribes remained - Judah and Simeon.

And now they were surrounded by Assyrian troops - like "*a hut in a garden of cucumbers.*" I suppose you could say the nation of Judah was *in a real pickle!*

“Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah...” Isaiah is speaking metaphorically.

To stress the depth of their sin and certainty of their judgment he refers to Judah as Sodom and Gomorrah.

In verse 11 God has a *beef* with the people’s *beef* - their sacrifices. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats." So what if someone brings a sacrifice when there’s willful sin and stubbornness their heart...

"When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts?

Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies - I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them." You know the church is bad when God no longer wants to attend the service.

Religious ritual is worthless if a person is guilty of rebellion in their heart. They’re trampling God’s court.

The Bible refers to acts of devotion as “*labors of love.*” Our worship should be an overflow of our genuine love for God - not a substitute for that love.

Obviously, expressions of worship are important.

Lovers know this truth. It's important to show love in tangible ways. *But God won't be played.* He hates it when a person goes through the motions *without the devotion.* He despises *a faith that's a farce.*

And Christians today can be just as guilty of this sort of hypocrisy as the Hebrews of old. When we sing a song, or raise our hands, or give an offering... **Let's always make sure God has no beef with our beef.**

Verse 15 **"When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood."**

What an irony, bloody hands - guilty hands - lifted up in worship to God. Hey, God ignores such prayers.

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Here's what God desires... **not beef, but belief.**

True faith and repentance ceases with sin. It puts away the evil, but it also practices the good... it does good, seeks justice, defends the weak... A sincere faith doesn't just cease to do evil. It learns to do good!

Verse 18 **"Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD...** God is inviting Judah to settle their dispute out-of-court. He doesn't want to judge them.

God wants to settle His grievances, and forgive His people, before he's forced to render a guilty verdict.

“Let us reason together...” And if you do, *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* Nothing is as pristine as a freshly fallen snow. It blankets everything - even the dirt - with a purity!

This is what happens to our past when God forgives us. His pardon sticks to us like fluffy, clean snow.

Judah can avoid God’s judgment and be clothed in His purity if they repent... *His promise is for us too!*

Verse 19 *“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword”; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”* Judah has a choice. It’s up to them. *Obey* will bring blessing. *Rebel* will bring ruin.

In verse 21 Isaiah compares Jerusalem to a harlot.

She’s committed spiritual harlotry - given her heart to idols. She broke her vows to God. Isaiah shouts, *“How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.*

Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water.” Judah once loved God and stood for truth, but her righteousness was diluted... *Has your love for God and His righteousness been slowly watered down?*

In today’s world, compromise is common. It’s been said, *“Compromise is feeding the alligator only to insure you’re the last one eaten.”* But you will be eaten.

Better to stand your ground and refuse to budge.

“Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

Therefore the Lord says, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel...” Here Isaiah uses three titles for God. It could be a subtle reference to the Trinity...

He quotes the Triune God, "Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and take vengeance on My enemies. I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy." God will judge His people in a way that purifies them.

“I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

Notice, **God punishes to purify**. His goal is to restore, and reestablish Jerusalem, but first He cleans house.

Never in its history has the city of Jerusalem qualified for the title, *"city of righteousness."* Rather than known for its faithfulness, the opposite is true.

Here's a promise for the future. This name looks to the day when Jesus returns to Earth to establish His Kingdom. He'll rule the world from Jerusalem. Then finally, Jerusalem will be known for its righteousness.

Verse 27 “Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness. The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees which you have desired; and you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens which you have chosen.”

You’ve seen folks cut their shrubbery in artistic shapes and designs? Believe it or not, this is nothing new. The ancient pagans worshipped fertility gods by growing groves and trimming the trees in the shape of phallic symbols. God saw this idolatry and said that Judah would one day be ashamed and embarrassed.

“For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has no water. The strong shall be as tinder, and the work of it as a spark; both will burn together, and no one shall quench them.”

Chapter 2, The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days...” Here’s a term that usually speaks of the end of this present age, “*the latter days.*”

It’s synonymous with the term “Day of the Lord.”

Today is *the day of man*. Rebellious men are having their say, getting their way - but the Day is coming when God will have the final say! Isaiah sees that day!

In it, “The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.”

“*The mountain of the LORD's house*” is in the center of Jerusalem. We call it **The Temple Mount**, or **Mount Moriah**. When you go to Israel you can travel to this very spot, and stand where Jesus will rule the world.

The Bible teaches that all nations will come once a year to worship Jesus on this mountain. Today, the Temple Mount is controlled by the WAQF or the Islamic religious authority. You’re forbidden to bring a Bible on the mountain. *I’ve heard of*

sneaky pastors who break the rules - smuggle Bibles under their jacket - and read them anyway. But the practice is officially forbidden.

Yet when Jesus reigns this mountain will become the site of all kinds of Bible teaching and Bible study. Verse 3 **“Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”**

Verse 4 is a famous verse. It speaks of the Messiah.

“He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” Jesus will bring peace.

Isaiah refers to the Messiah as **“the Prince of peace.”**

Jesus will orchestrate what has eluded mankind since Cain killed Abel - a genuine and lasting peace.

Today, Israel and Hamas are killing each other just a few miles from the mountain of the LORD’s house, but one day, when Jesus returns, He will bring true peace.

There’s a stone wall at the United Nations that bears an inscription. It’s the second half of Isaiah 2:4.

Ironically, it was a gift from the former Soviet Union.

And it’s no surprise godless atheists would leave off the first half of verse 4, **“He shall judge the nations, and rebuke many people...”** There can be no real peace without judgment. Righteousness won’t come until Jesus judges the nations, and rebukes the wicked.

Understand, Jesus will bring peace, but only after He kills off everyone who opposes the one, true God.

Verse 5 is an indictment that not only fits Judah of old, but it can also apply to modern day America.

“O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD. For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners.”

Sadly, our country has also forsaken God for a smorgasbord of “*eastern ways.*” Rather than remain true to our Judeo-Christian heritage, American culture has embraced eastern mysticism, and paganism.

There was a day when stress relief came in the form of prayer. Today, it’s Yoga or mindless meditation.

There was a time when ball players asked God to help them achieve their best. Now they visualize.

Today’s secular vocabulary has changed. Biblical terms have been replaced with eastern inferences. Bad circumstances are no longer “*God’s test*” or “*a judgment from God.*” It’s now called, “*bad karma.*”

The other day I heard a pastor use the expression, “*in a former life.*” I’m certain the man doesn’t believe in reincarnation, but his passing comment is evidence of how deeply eastern thought has permeated western culture. Biblical truth is no longer our bedrock.

We've come full circle... As Christianity spread across the Roman world, it liberated people from moral perversion, pagan superstition. and eastern religion.

Biblical Christianity spawned incredible prosperity in the West. But now we've rejected God's truth, and we're returning to the lies that once oppressed us.

This was also what had happened in Isaiah's day.

Yet not only had Judah become perverted, they'd also grown greedy. Verse 7, "Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. People bow down, and each man humbles himself; therefore do not forgive them."

Don't expect God's forgiveness if you're hanging on to a bagful of idols. *This is an error among Christians.*

Yes, forgiveness is free! There's nothing you can do to earn it - salvation is by grace through faith. But don't expect Jesus to save the person He cannot rule.

You've got to embrace the Lord alone if you want to know His pardon. How can you grab on to salvation if you won't let go of the idols you're holding in your hand?

"Either Jesus is *Lord of all or not Lord at all.*"

The day is coming when God will humble mankind.

Verse 10 warns, "Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day..."

Once an elder senator was talking to his freshmen colleague. He looked out his Washington window at the Potomac River, and pointed to a log. “Washington is like that log. There’re probably 100,000 grubs, ants, bugs, and critters on that old, floating log. And I imagine every one of them thinks he’s steering it.”

And that’s also true of the world at large. Everyone thinks they’re the captain of their own ship, *but their not*. In the end they’ll see that it’s God Who calls the shots. He’s in control. He alone is Master and Lord.

“For the day of the LORD of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up - and it shall be brought low - upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; upon every high tower, and upon every fortified wall; upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the beautiful sloops.

The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols He shall utterly abolish.” Humble pie will be served to everyone.

“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.” Revelation depicts cataclysmic terrors that will rock this Earth just prior to Jesus’ return.

The upheaval will be so severe, earthlings will hide in holes and caves from “the wrath of the Lamb.” Jesus, the Lamb of God, will roar like a lion! Apparently, Isaiah saw the same vision foreseen by John in Revelation.

I love J Vernon McGee's comment, "I don't know whether men were ever cavemen or not, but... in the future... men will be living in caves." The inhabitants of Earth will try to duck God's judgment, but they'll fail.

Verse 20 "In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made, each for himself to worship, to the moles and bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily."

When God shakes things up, men will realize the impotence of their worthless idols. They'll run for cover, but you can't escape God... Either you run into God's arms of love now, or you'll run from His terror then.

Verse 22 "Sever yourselves from such a man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for of what account is he?" The phrase "*whose breath is in his nostrils*" is another way of saying, "a mere mortal." His life is tenuous. Isaiah is encouraging His readers to trust in God and not a man.

In the days of God's final judgment - what the Bible calls "Great Tribulation" - the world will put its trust in a man. Antichrist will be hailed as mankind's Savior, but the world will quickly discover his promises are sinister.

Here Isaiah warns, "*sever yourself from such a man.*"

Chapter 3, "For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water..." God's judgment will end commerce.

“The mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder; the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter.” The men of the society will be cut down in God’s judgment. Only the kids will be left to govern... “I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable.”

Children will rule, but they’ll lack the wisdom to do it well. It reminds me of 2 Timothy 3:2. Paul lists some of the characteristics of the last days. Perilous times will come, and he adds, “disobedient to parents...”

This is certainly happening today. Many parents have lost control. Parents who are afraid to discipline their kids early in life have undisciplined teenagers later. **The inmates end up taking over the asylum.**

It’s revealing when companies no longer market products to parents. Today’s advertisements go right past the parents and target the kids directly. *Why?*

Because the kids are in charge! Parents refuse to put their foot down and say “no.” The kid gets whatever he wants, and later the parent is surprised when the child lacks the ability to say “no” to his own desires.

Once an Englishman, in the US, on holiday was quoted as saying, “**What impressed me most about America was how the parents obeyed their children.**”

Verse 6, “**When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, “You have clothing; you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your power,” in that day he will protest, saying, “I cannot cure your ills, for in my house is neither food nor**

clothing; do not make me a ruler of the people." Times will be so tough, so desperate, no one will aspire to public service.

People are too busy with their own pursuits.

"For Jerusalem stumbled, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves"

The city of Sodom was infamous for many reasons. Ezekiel 16 mentions her pride and greed. Genesis 18 speaks of her shameless acceptance of homosexuality.

Sodom was so depraved and calloused toward conscience, and nature, and morality, and godliness that homosexual behavior was legitimized in Sodom.

And is this not what's happened today in the West? *"They declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it..."*

In today's promiscuous society homosexuals feel emboldened. They're free to exit the closet. There's no longer any shame attached to their sin. And it's an indictment not only against the homosexual, but the society at large that's lost any kind of moral compass.

God judged Sodom for her blatant rebellion against God and nature. Several years ago this prompted Billy Graham to make the comment, *"If God does not judge America He'll have to apologize to Sodom..."* It's true.

Verse 10 *"Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."*

Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.”

In other words, *you reap what you sow!*

Verse 12, “As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.” Again, this sounds like modern America. The greatest social problem in our country today is the absence of strong, loving male leadership.

Children oppress and women rule, because men have bailed on leadership. Men are missing in action.

Absent dads - apathetic husbands - are epidemic.

I use to think women wanted to rule over men, but I’m afraid most women end up doing so out of necessity. Deep in a woman’s heart she wants a man she can trust and follow. She desires a loving leader.

But after being jilted a few times a growing distrust for men builds in her heart. She ends up bitter, and calloused, and cautious. She’s afraid to let a man lead.

Here’s the challenge today... Christian men need to lovingly lead. And Christian women need to let them. If so, society and children grow stronger and healthier.

Verse 13 “The LORD stands up to plead, and stands to judge the people. The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders of His people and His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the faces of the poor?" says the Lord GOD

of hosts.” Here’s another mark of a society in decline... *cruelty toward the poor and outsiders.*

The Israelis welfare system was ingenious. A portion of the crop was left in the fields un-harvested.

The poor people were allowed to come after the gleaners had harvested the crop, and take away what was left. It was more than a hand out. Poor folks had to show initiative, and work to receive their benevolence.

Here God rebukes princes for *“eating up the vineyard”* and plundering the house of the poor. Sheer greed had taken food from the poor man’s mouth.

“Moreover the LORD says: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet...” Isaiah measured the society’s moral and spiritual health in several ways...

Disrespect toward parents... Quality of political candidates... Acceptance of homosexuality... Absence of male leadership... Callousness towards the poor...

But here’s another benchmark... *The carnality of women.* And sadly, in Isaiah’s day *“the daughters of Zion”* were vain, and seductive, and materialistic.

Jerusalem’s Desperate Housewives abandoned their home and family. They walked about jingling jewelry, *“mincing as they go...”* They were selfish and spoiled.

The word *“mincing”* means pampered.

Recently a wife was quoted in the LA Times, *“Men don’t understand that shopping is our drug of choice...”*

She was justifying the stash of credit cards she hid from her husband. This was the attitude in Isaiah's day. Women impressed with outward beauty - not virtue.

And punishment will come to these ladies.

Verse 17, "Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will uncover their secret parts." God will replace her stylish locks - her expensive do - with an ugly scab.

In verses 18-23 it's as if Isaiah turns a lady's purse upside down, and dumps out its contents: "In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose jewels..." There's nothing new about nose rings. The Orientals had them.

"The festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes..." Ladies, the Lord of glory has just gone through your drawers - He's examined your wardrobe - and found nothing of lasting value.

Verse 24 says the horrors of war are coming to the spas and salons of Jerusalem. "So it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war. Her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate shall sit on the ground."

The smell of perfume will be masked by soot from the fire... Scarves and hair color will be replaced with sackcloth and shaved heads... Captors will adorn wrists and ankles with ropes not bracelets... Rather than cosmetics, women will be branded as a slave...

Judgment will come if Judah doesn't repent!