

Judgment on Judah

Isaiah 3:1-26

By Scott Huckaby

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Isaiah 3:1-12 – Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

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;

² *The mighty man and the man of war, The judge and the prophet, And the diviner and the elder;*

³ *The captain of fifty and the honorable man, The counselor and the skillful artisan, And the expert enchanter.*

⁴ *"I will give children to be their princes, And babes shall rule over them.*

⁵ *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."*

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,"*

⁷ *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."*

⁸ *For Jerusalem stumbled, And Judah is fallen, Because their tongue and their doings Are against the Lord, To provoke the eyes of His glory.*

⁹ *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.

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

¹¹ *Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, For the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

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."

v1 – How will God judge Judah?

For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store: God's judgment on Judah, at this point, includes taking away their food (stock and the store) and water.

What does the title Lord of Hosts tell us about God?

The specific phrase here, the Lord of hosts, is used more than 15 times in the Old Testament, and often by Isaiah

(Isaiah 1:24, 3:1, 3:15, 10:23-24, 10:33, 19:4, 22:5, 22:12, 22:14-15, and 28:22).

- It emphasizes the majesty and power of God, because the idea behind Lord of hosts is that God is "Commander in Chief" of heaven's armies.

What is God doing today to get our attention?

The same thing... taking away what we need to live, our food and water; and in our modern society, fuel, power, and internet. So far it has only been warnings but the pain is coming as long as this nation stays on its ungodly path.

v2-4 – What else did God take away from Judah?

God also brought judgment on Judah by depriving them of godly, competent leaders on every level: 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. Instead of wise, competent leaders, God will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

2 Kings 24:14 – Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

What is the principle behind this judgment on Judah?

One way God brings judgment on a nation is to curse them with incompetent, ungodly leaders. Often, this is the simplest avenue of judgment: giving people what their wicked hearts desire.

Is the USA under such judgment today?

It certainly looks like it but at some point you have to ask: are our federal government officials merely incompetent or are they evil? While most are merely incompetent, there are many powerful agents who are all-in on various doctrines of demons like global warming and globalism in general.

v5 – What can people expect from ungodly, incompetent leadership?

The people will be oppressed, and there will be a breakdown of order in society (*the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable*).

- Lawlessness results in oppression

v6-7 – How bad will things get with the leadership of Judah?

Things will become so bad, that in the minds of the people, the smallest achievements will qualify a man for leadership: *You have clothing, you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your hand*. Yet, even such a man will not want to lead: *In that day, he will protest, saying, "I cannot cure your ills ... do not make me a ruler of the people."*

- The prophet is describing the consequences of a total collapse of the state. This was certainly the case in the months following May 1945 in Germany.

v8 – Why was Judah ripe for judgment?

Judah had sinned in what they said and did because it was against the LORD. In fact, what they say and what they do provoked the eyes of His glory.

Which is worse, to speak or act against God?

They are equally bad. It is easier to think that what we do is more offensive to God, than what we say. But we are commanded to glorify God by what we say just as much as by what we do.

Matthew 12:36-37 – *For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

Jesus even upped the ante pointing out that what we think matters as well equating anger with murder and lust with adultery.

v9 – What kind of look reveals a person's spiritual condition?

The look on their countenance witnesses against them: The very look on their faces is evidence of their guilt. Either they have smirk of the reprobate, or the downcast gaze of those under conviction.

How does a person's speech reveal their spiritual condition?

And they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it: Their sin is openly displayed, and there have no sense of shame.

- In the name of "frankness" and "honesty" and "let's not be hypocrites," all kinds of sin is approved.

How are we seeing sin being flaunted today as something that is natural and right?

The escalation of the LGBTQ+ narrative. It is anti-God at its core and getting bolder every day.

Ephesians 5:12 – *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.*

It is important to not talk about many sins. It is through these means that God's people declare a standard, even though they do not perfectly measure up to a standard.

Is it hypocritical to promote a standard you don't perfectly meet?

No; one of the most destructive lies of our time is that it is hypocritical to have a standard that we don't live up to. This attitude in our society translates into a wholesale lowering of standards.

- Hypocrisy is when you pretend to keep the standard when you do not, or think it is fine for you to not keep the standard, when you think others should.

What did God have to do to bring judgment on Judah?

Nothing! *For they have brought evil upon themselves:* God did not have to do anything unique or special to bring this judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. All He had to do was leave them alone, and allow them to have brought evil upon themselves.

Romans 1:28 – *even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting*

When the LORD gives a nation the leadership they desire and deserve, it is either a blessing or a curse.

v10-11 – What is the encouragement to the righteous?

Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them: even in the midst of judgment, God knows how to bless and protect His people. Sometimes this is only seen in the perspective of eternity, but God assures us that the righteous will never share the same fate as the wicked.

Genesis 18:25 – *Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked... Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

How is God just in His judgment?

They shall eat the fruit of their doings ... for the reward of his hands shall be given him: God will give both the righteous and the wicked the reward they deserve. For the righteous, this is a comfort, for the wicked, it is a curse.

v12 – What aspect of God's judgment is emphasized?

children are their oppressors, and women rule over them: Again, the LORD both declares and bemoans His judgment on Judah, that they have been given incompetent and ungodly leadership.

How was allowing women to rule over them seen as a curse, not a blessing?

Certainly, God may raise up women at particular times to be leaders in different spheres. Deborah (Judges 4-5) and Esther are examples of this. But this entirely different than a society where, in general, women rule over them. Such a society is cursed, not blessed.

What do the incompetent leaders do to the people?

Those who lead you cause you err, and destroy the way of your paths: They will cause people to stray even further from the Lord making the consequences even worse.

Isaiah 3:13-26 – Oppression and Luxury Condemned

¹³ *The Lord stands up to plead,
And stands to judge the people.*

¹⁴ *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.*

¹⁵ *What do you mean by crushing My people And grinding the faces of the poor?” Says the Lord God of hosts.*

¹⁶ *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,*

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.”*

¹⁸ *In that day the Lord will take away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;*

¹⁹ *The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;*

²⁰ *The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,*

²¹ *and the rings; The nose jewels,*

²² *the festal apparel, and the mantles;*

The outer garments, the purses,

²³ *and the mirrors; The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.*

²⁴ *And 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.*

²⁵ *Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.*

²⁶ *Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she being desolate shall sit on the ground.*

v13 – What does this imagery of the Lord standing up to plead and judge Judah bring to mind?

Here, the LORD is both a prosecutor (stands up to plead) and a judge against Judah. When you are in court, and the prosecutor and the judge are the same person, you know you are going to be found guilty!

v14-15 – What evidence of Judah’s sin is before the court?

The plunder of the poor is in your houses. God’s charge against the elders and the princes of Israel is not that they have failed to help the poor. That would be bad in itself. But far worse than that, they have robbed the poor, and taken advantage of their poverty to enrich themselves.

How is our society doing in regard to this today?

Not very well... the divide between the rich and poor is growing and we are doing the best we can to increase the numbers of the poor.

v16 – What else characterized sinful Judah?

The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks: The women of Judah were proud. They were taken with themselves, and loved to consider themselves better than others (are haughty).

What is the role of pride in causing people to sin?

A proud heart was the basis for the rest of the sin among the daughters of Zion.

- It is interesting to note that the LBGT+ crowd have embraced “pride” as something to be flaunted.

What is the biblical answer to pride?

Philippians 2:3 – *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

Humility as Jesus humbled Himself to enter our world and go to the cross on our behalf.

What does the “wanton eyes” tell us about the women of Judah?

They were sexually seductive and promiscuous. They wanted to behold and attract what was sexually impure.

How were the women of Judah at this time contrasted with what women of God?

Titus 2:5 – *to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed*

It is interesting that Titus 2:5 says that women who are not chaste blaspheme the Word of God.

What is with the “walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet”?

The women of Judah were obsessed with finery, luxury, and "accessories." They devoted far too much of their lives to their appearance and their image.

- This problem has been exacerbated today with social media and taking selfies.

v17-23 – What will be the consequences of the haughtiness of the women of Judah?

He would strike their vanity taking away their beauty and making them exposed and humiliated. He'd also take away their collection of accessories:

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, the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

Sounds like they had some pretty good malls in Jerusalem!

Is such vanity of the women of Judah at that time unique to women?

Many men have a problem with it also. But our culture puts more such pressure on women to prioritize their appearance with advertising and other media.

How can women of God resist the pressure the culture puts on them?

Take the Spirit's advise through Peter to heart:

1 Peter 3:3-4 – *Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

People can see inward beauty. Indeed, it is a prerequisite for outward beauty.

v24 – What other consequences would the people of Judah experience in God's judgment?

Instead of ... Instead of ... Instead of ... Instead of ...
instead of: The LORD will replace their finery with the marks of captivity and humiliation. They will live the stench, the baldness, the branding and the general deprivation of captivity.

What is the consequence of forgetting that God can take all our blessings away?

How much more reason to honor God with what we have, instead of indulging ourselves.

v25 – How would the coming Babylonian war reveal the vanity of the immoral women of Judah?

Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war: without doubt, one reason the daughters of Zion loved all the luxury and finery was because it made them more attractive to men. They felt they could "get" men that way. But their ungodly love of luxury and finery resulted in the loss of their men.

v26 – What will become of the immoral women of Judah?

She being desolate shall sit on the ground: A Roman medal, struck after Jerusalem's fall in 70 AD, shows a Jewish woman being desolate, sitting under a palm tree next to a Roman soldier.

What applications come to mind from our discussion today?

- Ungodly incompetent leadership is a consequence of a nation turning away from God.
- Ungodly leadership is always oppressive.
- What we think and say is as important as what we do... all will be judged.
- All Christians should prioritize inward beauty way ahead of outward beauty