

There are consequences for rebellion against God. We all experience the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7). We refuse to keep our marital commitments and we wonder why we have grown distant. We leave our Bible on the shelf and wonder why we are spiritually struggling. We slack off at work and are angry because we didn't get a raise. We quit exercising and can't figure out why we have gained so much weight. It must be a thyroid issue. We have a habit of looking outside ourselves for something or someone to blame when the problem is in our own heart (Genesis 3:12-13).

We had a vivid picture in chapter one of the future of Jerusalem if they chose not to repent and change their ways. Spiritually they were already a shack in the midst of a cucumber field picked over by foreigners (Isaiah 1:8). That spiritual condition would become their physical reality if they did not repent. Chapter two was filled with accusations and warnings and final plea to turn from putting faith in material goods and man (Isaiah 2:22).

God has warned them of the justice He would enact. He invited them to come to Him and promised He would wash them clean (Isaiah 1:18-19). He even gave them a view of the coming kingdom of God to motivate them. They would not be moved. This chapter now moves to a prophetic view of what will actually happen. Justice is on the way. It will refine them like a fire refines silver.

¹ For behold, the Lord GOD of hosts is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah support and supply, all support of bread, and all support of water; ² the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, ³ the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skillful magician and the expert in charms. Isaiah 3:1-3 First, note who it is that declares this. It is the Lord of hosts! He is the Lord of angel armies. What He declares is what will be. This is certain. If the invitation didn't get their attention, a vivid description of the coming wrath might wake some up.

This is a list of everything they put their faith in. Food and water are the basic essentials. What would we do without them? How do people behave without it? More frightening than starvation is what humans will do when they are desperate. Imagine the water supply of any metropolitan city being cut off. Imagine grocery stores closed because there was no food to stock.

If that weren't bad enough, there will be no army to protect against invaders, and no power to enforce civility, for the mighty man, judge, and soldier will be removed. We've recently seen a bit of the chaos that erupts in a city that feels injustice is done. Overnight it turns from calm to terror. The unbelievers' trust in military and judicial defense will be dashed (Hosea 3:4).

Commented [PW1]: Galatians 6:7 (NIV)
⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Commented [PW2]: Genesis 3:12-13 (ESV)
¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."
¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Commented [PW3]: Isaiah 1:8 (ESV)
⁸ And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.

Commented [PW4]: Isaiah 2:22 (ESV)
²² Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

Commented [PW5]: Isaiah 1:18-20 (ESV)
¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;
²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Commented [PW6]: Hosea 3:4 (ESV)
⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods.

Where do we turn when our supplies have run out, the police force has fled, and the courts are abandoned. Finally, we turn to God. But the prophet, diviner, and elder are also gone. So form a militia! But the captain of 50, the man of rank, and the counselor are gone too. There is nothing left but the corner fortune-teller and a lucky rabbit's foot. Now we realize how really powerless they are. That is why we turn to them last in the time of crisis.

So who is in charge now? ⁴ *And I will make boys their princes, and infants shall rule over them.* ⁵ *And the people will oppress one another, every one his fellow and every one his neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the despised to the honorable.* Isaiah 3:4-5 This could mean the leaders have such a lack of experience that they are like youth (1 Kings 3:7). It may be literal. The young, insolent gangs of youth take over because there is no one to stop them. This would happen because the people that were productive and influential were all taken into captivity. Only the poor were left in the land (2 Kings 25:12). When there is no teaching or example of righteousness, it's everyone for themselves. The elders who could give good advice are treated with insolence. Disrespect for the aged is a sign of barbarism. *Good government is one of God's best gifts to a sinful race.*⁴

We have a youth fixated culture. We are absorbed with looking good and being physically healthy. As America's morality declines, we see this more and more. Youth take advantage of the elderly and treat them with contempt, ignoring their voice of experience (1 Kings 12:8). I've done too many funerals in which the main thought of the survivors was not the godly testimony of that loved one but about who will get the most money.

⁶ *For a man will take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying: "You have a cloak; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule";* ⁷ *in that day he will speak out, saying: "I will not be a healer; in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you shall not make me leader of the people."* Isaiah 3:6-7 There will be such a lack of leadership that a man with a basic cloak will be nominated to lead. That's not because they have leadership skills, but because of the desperation for a leader. No one would want to lead the rabble and rubble that is left. That is the desperate state of what would remain in the land. It became the condition after the Assyrian invasion. Our next verse tells us why this happened.

⁸ *For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence.* Isaiah 3:8 The literal meaning of "defying his glorious presence" is "before His glorious eyes". Our words and actions show we either delight in or defy His glorious presence. When a person goes back into sin they had once forsaken, we used to say, "They fell." I don't hear that expression much anymore. The implication was that they were walking with the Lord, and they fell back into sin, like falling into a pit. Their speech and their deeds were in

Commented [PW7]: 1 Kings 3:7 (ESV)

⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.

Commented [PW8]: 2 Kings 25:12 (ESV)

¹² But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen.

Commented [PW9]: Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah Vol 1, p 145*

Commented [PW10]: 1 Kings 12:8 (ESV)

⁸ But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him.

defiance of the holy God before Whom we live. Speech and deeds are the whole expression of our hearts. Some might fall in speech but not in deeds or vice-versa. Jerusalem stumbled in both before the glorious eyes of God. And when the capital stumbles the nation falls.

The previous chapters spelled it out. They practiced injustice and worshiped false gods all the while going through the religious rituals God required (Isaiah 1:13). And it isn't as if they were convicted and felt bad about it. They were brazen in their sin. ⁹ *For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves.* Isaiah 3:9 You don't have to look far to see this evident today. It's everywhere. We call sin a lifestyle choice. If you dare to insist on calling it sin, you are intolerant. Never mind that your motive is for the person's good and the behavior is destructive. You are expected to welcome it as the new normal. They proclaim their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it. I see it on a daily basis, and it grieves my soul (2 Peter 2:7).

The consequences of those choices are well known. It's not as if the information isn't available. But it brings a momentary pleasure or is the preferred route for the flesh to take, so they run headlong to their own destruction. They bring evil on themselves. God doesn't have to judge them. The consequences of their actions do. I've seen it over and over, pleaded with people to see where they were headed. They want God to rescue them from a crisis resulting from their actions, but they are unwilling to change their ways.

In stark contrast God declared, ¹⁰ *Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.* ¹¹ *Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him.* Isaiah 3:10-11 Most of the righteous went into captivity and prospered. There was a refining time of transition, but many did so well in the foreign land that they did not want to return. They sowed righteous actions and they reaped the fruit of their deeds. Both the godly and the wicked sowed speech and actions and each reaped the fruit of what they sowed. It is an eternal truth. What are you sowing? If you answer that question then you know what you will reap, as long as you aren't fooling yourself.

¹² *My people—infants are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, your guides mislead you and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.* Isaiah 3:12 How can infants oppress? When the inexperienced gain power without humility, pride becomes a vicious task-master. Women rule over them. This is not a condemnation of women leaders. It is a statement about the lack of male leadership. God had no problem with Deborah being a judge over Israel (Judges 4:4-5). The problem was that men who remained weren't sacrificial enough to lead.

Commented [PW11]: Isaiah 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

Commented [PW12]: 2 Peter 2:7 (ESV)

⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked

Commented [PW13]: Judges 4:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

⁵ She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Their guides had misled them. They had led them down a path of pseudo-religion that had a form of godliness without the power to change the life (2 Timothy 3:5). In fact, they excused the evil choices the people made. We have the exact same problem today. Our universities and denominations are overrun with post-modern nonsense. It is logically incoherent and fosters abandonment to one's desires. It is a message of living for the moment with abandon (1 Timothy 5:6). Sheri showed the admin board a graph of the S.A.T. average scores since the date prayer was taken out of schools. It was a slow steady upward trend until that year and has gone down steadily since. It's no wonder, because ideologies have trumped historical fact. Political correctness has triumphed over free speech. They have swallowed up the way we should go and replaced it with a path to destruction.

¹³ The LORD has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples. ¹⁴ The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. ¹⁵ What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" declares the Lord GOD of hosts. Isaiah 3:13-15 The Scriptures often declare the consequences of abusing the poor. You may wonder how leaders abuse the poor today. They foster a culture of dependency. The more children you have, the more welfare you receive. Why work when the government will pay you to stay at home. Of course there are those who truly need help in difficult times in their life. But extended support only encourages a dependent lifestyle keeping them in poverty but receiving their vote come next election (1 Timothy 5:8). *Rather than living to enrich others, false leaders ride on the backs of others. One way God judges His people is by depriving them of worthy leaders.*²

There has been a lot of talk recently about the real problem being households where the father has abandoned the children. There are so many single moms. The selfishness of men and their failure to live up to their responsibilities is one reason, but I think the main reason is individual selfishness and a lack of Christ likeness from both men and women.

¹⁶ The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, Isaiah 3:16 Female stars today seem to think their way to fame is to act in an ever increasingly shocking way. Children are paying attention and imitating the depravity. There is nothing wrong with women modestly dressing tastefully and using makeup to enhance their looks. It crosses the line when it becomes sexually provocative. Ask yourself if it is lovely or sexy (1 Timothy 2:9-10). What a double standard we have in our culture! While complaining that women are objectified, they glorify women who display themselves as objects of pleasure.

The dress, jewelry, and make-up express the haughtiness in their hearts. Outstretched necks was a description of pride. And it all goes back to a self-centered attitude that it

Commented [PW14]: 2 Timothy 3:5 (ESV)

⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Commented [PW15]: 1 Timothy 5:6 (ESV)

⁶ but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Commented [PW16]: 1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Commented [PW17]: Raymond Ortland - Preaching the Word - Isaiah: God Saves Sinners. Comment on 3:14

Commented [PW18]: 1 Timothy 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

is all about me. "Where's the man that will treat me like the queen I am?" Until we realize that lasting happiness can't be found in things of this world, we will keep trying to fill our lives with things that inevitably fail us.

The justice of God is so harsh that it is hard to read, but remember it is meant to refine them. ¹⁷ *therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.* ¹⁸ *In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents;* ¹⁹ *the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves;* ²⁰ *the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets;* ²¹ *the signet rings and nose rings;* ²² *the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags;* ²³ *the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.* ²⁴ *Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty.* Isaiah 3:17-24 If removal of all these worldly things women rely on to make them attractive and feel valued, even prideful, would turn them toward the true beauty of the heart (1 Peter 3:4), then it must be done. Our eternal good far outweighs our pleasure in what is passing.

Take a guess at how much the make-up and women's clothing industries take in each year? 100 billion dollars in the USA alone! And that isn't counting perfume, hair salons, nail salons, and jewelry. We spend our money on what we think is really important. Again, there is absolutely nothing wrong with looking lovely, but an excessive focus on one's pride being placed in their appearance shows they have missed what is truly of value. Beauty, wealth, possessions are all gifts from God. There is nothing wrong with any thing God gives us. It is how our heart relates to that gift. Do we see it as a gift to be used for His glory or does it feed our pride and rebellion against God?

²⁵ *Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle.* Isaiah 3:25 The men these women were chasing were going to die in battle. Their dreams of happily ever after would be shattered. That is what it took.

²⁶ *And her gates shall lament and mourn; empty, she shall sit on the ground.* Isaiah 3:26 The gates were the place of news, of court cases, and the place of welcoming the in and out flow of goods (Psalm 100:4). No longer would it be a place of joy and excitement, but rather of grieving. Today it would be an airport where people happily greet loved ones that have been away, but now filled with mourners because of the destruction.

¹ *And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach."* Isaiah 4:1 Like the men in verse six desperate for a leader, the women will be desperate for man to take away their personal shame.

Commented [PW19]: 1 Peter 3:4 (ESV)
⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Commented [PW20]: Psalm 100:4 (ESV)
⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

This is so far the harshest of prophecies. There isn't an invitation as in previous prophecies. The only hope offered is that the righteous will reap the fruit of their deeds. But we must remember, this is what happened. Isaiah was God's instrument to warn them to turn. They wouldn't accept God's invitations, and so He told them the consequences that they were bringing on themselves.

Was it mean spirited of Isaiah to preach the harsh truth of this message? Or was it gracious of God to tell the rebellious people of Judah just what they were bringing upon themselves? How should the people have responded? How should we respond? *God knows how to enrich us through loss. Sometimes he takes away more than we would wish he would, but only to give us more of himself forever.*³

How much of this applies to our nation? They declare their sin as Sodom and do not hide it. Your guides mislead you. Is the Lord standing to judge those who devour the poor for their own advantage? Are women rising up to be senators and running for president because we don't have men that are godly leaders ready to serve the nation? Are our women focused on outer rather than inner beauty? Is our faith placed in our wealth and military might?

If it does apply to us as a nation, what should our response be to these warnings of what we as a nation will bring upon ourselves? *Has our culture invaded our own homes and lives, our very way of thinking, or are we in agreement with God?*

There is one line of hope in this passage, just one way to turn. As for the righteous, they will reap the fruit of their deeds. Are our speech and deeds sowing righteousness or evil? Will we reap good fruit or bring destruction upon ourselves? Each person must make the choice of what they will sow. Each person will reap what he or she has sown (Galatians 6:8).

Questions:

- 1 What was God removing from Jerusalem?
- 2 What would that be like in the USA?
- 3 What would be the new condition?
- 4 Why must God do this?
- 5 Where is His glorious presence then and now?
- 6 Do verses 8 – 9 apply to Sedona?
- 7 What is the promise to the righteous?
- 8 Why is the Lord contending with the elders and princes?
- 9 What did the Lord oppose in the women?
- 10 What should have been their response?

Commented [PW21]: Raymond Ortland, *Preaching the Word, Isaiah*, Introduction to chapter 3

Commented [PW22]: Galatians 6:8 (ESV)
⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.