

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

By

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ISAIAH CHAPTER THREE

JUDAH'S FALLEN CONDITION

"For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the Judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him:, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over thorn. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts" (verses 1-15).

THIS third chapter continues along the same line as chapter two, but makes it very definitely clear that it is Jerusalem and Judah which GOD has in view above all others when He speaks of coming desolation and unsparing judgment.

The covenant people and the one-time holy city had gone so far from the path of obedience that GOD Himself prepared them for the vengeance decreed by weakening their means of defense.

Children were their princes and babes ruled over them. Their leaders, in other words, were like infants unable to control themselves, much less to guide others aright, so disorder and confusion prevailed in place of orderly government. When GOD is dethroned, anarchy always results.

In their desperation, men were ready to follow anyone who might seem to be able to point out a way of escape from the present misery and might promise to bring order out of the chaotic condition prevailing. But those to whom they turned for guidance were in utter bewilderment themselves, and so refused to take the responsibility of seeking to rectify the abuses which were affecting the nation so adversely (verses 5-7).

The root-cause of all the trouble is indicated in verse 8, "**Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory.**" Thus they had brought down judgment upon their own heads, and so we hear the solemn "**woes**" pronounced against them - two in this chapter (verses 9 and 11); and six in chapter five (verses 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22).

First we read, "**Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.**" Then in verse 11, "**Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.**" As for the righteous remnant, GOD will care for them, protecting them in the day of storm and stress (verse 10).

Alas, the great majority of the people were oblivious to their danger and were content to go on with children as their oppressors and women ruling over them, as we have seen; a weak and powerless leadership that could not lift them above the existing confusion.

The Psalmist prayed, "**Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified**" (Psalm 143:2). There is none now to plead for the guilty leaders in Judah; rather, the Lord Himself stands up to plead against them and to enter into judgment with them. Because of the way they have misled the people and abused their confidence, He will hold them accountable for all their waywardness.

"Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground" (verses 16-26).

The vain women too who have given themselves to folly come in for a stern rebuke.

In their pride and empty-headedness, their one great concern has been personal adornment. Vain of their beauty, they sought to add to it by every device known to women of fashion. But GOD was about to smite them with sore diseases that would disfigure them and make them to be loathed by their former admirers.

It may seem strange to observe that GOD took note of all the ornaments and apparel that they relied upon to make themselves attractive, but we need to remember that in the New Testament careful instruction is given to women that their adorning be not that which is outward, such as wearing of jewels, putting on of apparel and wearing the hair attractively, but rather that meekness and grace which is the adornment of the heart.

It is well for Christian women to pay careful attention to that which is here set forth, as becoming to women professing godliness. Pride and vanity are alike hateful to GOD, whether manifested in men or in women. In due time such behavior must be dealt with by Him in judgment if there be no repentance.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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