

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 8
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The Four Horsemen by Mark Wilkinson

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Eight

NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION BECAUSE OF SIN

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Isaiah 3:1–12

¹ For, behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; ²the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the elder; ³the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the expert artificer, and the skilful enchanter. ⁴And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. ⁵And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable. ⁶When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand; ⁷in that day shall he lift up his voice, saying, I will not be a healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the people. ⁸For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory. ⁹The show 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 done evil unto themselves. ¹⁰Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. ¹¹Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him. ¹²As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths (ASV, 1901).

THE LORD REMOVES ALL JERUSALEM'S SUPPORT

Isaiah 3:1–4

¹ For, behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; ²the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the elder; ³the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the expert artificer, and the skilful enchanter, ⁴And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. (ASV, 1901).

God has been using the prophet Isaiah to let the people of the world and particularly those of Judah and Jerusalem know what some of the effects of His judgment will be on the earth during the Tribulation. He now switches back to the sins of the people of Judah and Jerusalem during Isaiah's life in the late eighth century B.C. Because of their continued sin He says that He will remove their fundamental support systems. The most fundamental support that will be removed,

bread and water are the indispensable for existence. The whole stay, however, not just bread and water, will be removed, and thus the nation will be deprived by God of its most necessary means of life. When God metes out His justice on the people of Judah and Jerusalem it will cause the most prominent of its citizens, that is, the men and women of power and influence to perish slowly through famine and war. The leaders who led the people into sinful practices will be taken away and replaced with the young and inexperienced. Because of her sin the LORD would take away all the people on which she depended. Six classes and occupations of men are designated.

1. Soldiers
2. Judges
3. Prophets
4. Wise people
5. Military leaders
6. Skilled workers

The fact that Isaiah included the diviner, and the clever enchanter in this list does not mean he was endorsing them. He was merely noting those on whom the nation was depending for survival and security. The Mosaic Law clearly prohibited any involvement in soothsaying and enchanting which, are tied to the occult (Deuteronomy 18:10–14). Babylon trusted in this (Isaiah 47:12). The country will be robbed of its false support, and torn out of its comfort. The kingdom of Judah would descend into the most shameless despotism: *“And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.”* The glory of the reign of the last king of the unified empire, Solomon will be followed, by the times of Rehoboam. He was an immature young man when he ascended to the throne who followed the influence of his young friends and rejected the wise council of the advisors to his father (I Kings 12:8). His father had written of this folly.

Ecclesiastes 10:16–17

¹⁶*Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!*

¹⁷*Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness (ASV, 1901).*

Solomon contrasted the despotic state of a nation whose leaders are incompetent and undisciplined with the blessed state of a nation whose leaders are competent and disciplined. The former kind of leaders are childish. But the latter kind of leaders are well prepared by noble birth and training. Incompetent leaders are intemperate: *eat in the morning* and are involved in revelry and drunkenness (Ecclesiastes 10:17; see Isaiah 5:11 and Acts 2:15 for similar ideas). But competent leaders are temperate: they eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness.

THE POPULATION BECOMES OPPRESSED

Isaiah 3:5

⁵And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable (ASV, 1901).

The result of the unrepentant sin will be young and inexperienced leadership assuming control and oppressing everybody. The people will not respect them and will not subordinate themselves to this nonsensical leadership. This will result in anarchy and a state of affairs wherein everyone will consider themselves capable of exercising authority, thereby forcing their will on their fellow citizens. This is definitely anarchy. God will send an evil spirit among them too (as Judges 9:23), which would make them, prone to bring harm to each other, and their princes, being children, will take no care to restrain the oppressors or relieve the oppressed, nor will it do any good to appeal to them (because every man to be his own avenger), and therefore they bite and devour one another and will soon be consumed one of another. There will be no leadership control.

When respect for the elderly, experienced and wise is denied, moral anarchy closely follows. The young will fight against, that is, they move to harm the aged. Respect for old age by them is viewed as the old law and the fear of God, “*Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD*” (Leviticus 19:32). When all authority passes, respect for age also passes. One evidence of the degeneration of a government, country, and people is seen in the manner in which the elderly are treated. What is here pictured is a social war of all against all including those whom God has honored with the blessing of long life. The elderly should be honored with expressions of civility. Those who in age and wisdom are worthy of double honor. 1) they should be consulted because of their experience, their counsels asked and 2) attention should be paid to them, (Job 32:6–7). Christianity teaches good manners, and obliges us to give honor to the elderly, experienced, and wise (I Timothy 5:1–2, 17; I Peter 5:5; etc.). It is an instance of great degeneracy and disorder in a land when *the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable*. So, in the natural order that God created the elders and respectable people are held in high esteem. But, outside God’s plan for societal order the opposite will be true. The young people will be insolent toward the elderly and experienced and the crude, vulgar and uncouth will be dominating the respectable people. People who engage in grave sins but view them as minor will try to domineer righteous, God fearing people.

DESPERATION ENSUES

Isaiah 3:6–8

⁶When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand; ⁷in that day shall he lift up his voice, saying, I will not be a healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the people. ⁸For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory (ASV, 1901).

*When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand he is depicting the situation of overwhelming poverty and looking for capable and worthy leadership. Isaiah is using a simile of one grabbing at the garment of another who appears to have some modicum of wealth. They sense this is indicative of prominence and capability of leading the nation out of the massive distress and anarchy that is rampant everywhere. The people will plead, *Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand*, to accept the position and responsibility of leadership of the nation. The people mistakenly view the individual's clothing as a symbol of authority that will be obeyed by the rebellious citizens to settle the chaos. They think that surely your word will be obeyed by the population. They are not considering the source of the chaos which is the sin against the Almighty God. These men however, respond with a refusal of leadership roles because of their paucity. They too have *neither bread nor clothing*: and respond to the request for them to be leaders with the statement," *ye shall not make me ruler of the people.*"*

In fact, the source of all Jerusalem's problems are because they have sinned against God in both word and deed. They behaved as though He does not see or hear their behavior. Worse, they did not care if He was aware of their behavior. Their desires to carry out their sins was so strong that they tried to avoid His acknowledgement of their behavior and His authority.

Romans 1:28–32

²⁸And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: ³²who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them (ASV, 1901).

BOLDNESS IN SIN

Isaiah 3:9–11

⁹The show 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 done evil unto themselves. ¹⁰Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. ¹¹Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him (ASV, 1901).

The brazen nature of their countenance or outward expressions reveals their attitude toward their sins. They do not think they are sinning, they just view these desires they have as *who they are* and that the righteous have put a restraint upon them. Just like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah they have no desire to conceal their sins. In fact, they exhibit a pride over their ability to publicly sin without any legal restraint of their behavior. They brought this evil upon themselves and have

no one else to blame for this when the correction comes. The destruction that comes during their lifetime as in the examples of Judah, Jerusalem, and Sodom are one sphere of correction. The worse one is the eternal damnation that will befall them when they as unsaved God haters enter the Lord's domain and immediately realize their rebellion against Him. People of all ages are responsible for their behavior. The righteous person will enjoy the fruits of his restraint and shall *eat the fruit of their doings*. The wicked will experience Divine retribution for *what his hands have done shall be done unto him*. We are not responsible for the thoughts Satan pours into our minds. We are responsible for what we do with them once he pours his evil into us. We must submit ourselves to God and resist the Devil then he will flee from us (James 4:7). We are to stay with God in all circumstances.

Romans 1:18–25

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. ²⁰For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: ²¹because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. ²²Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things ²⁴Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: ²⁵for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen (ASV, 1901).

The way God will turn them over to the lusts of the hearts is through demonic influence and make it so that their consciences will no longer be able to let them know their behavior is sin against the Creator.

I Timothy 4:1–2

But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, ²through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron (ASV, 1901).

SIN REVERSES GOD HIERARCHICAL ORDER

Isaiah 3:12

¹²As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths (ASV, 1901).

God has provided a hierarchical order to this world. Prior to the fall, woman's position in comparison to the man's was subordinate due to Adam's divinely ordained headship. After the fall firmer, headship was invested in man due to woman's responding to the serpent. The multiplied sorrow and pain of women in childbirth and motherhood was also one result. Man would henceforth earn his living by sweat (Genesis 2:15); man's life would now be filled with sorrow and ultimate death (Genesis 3:19; Ephesians 2:5). The most significant curse was the spiritual death, which Adam and Eve experienced "*on the day they ate of the fruit.*" Right after the Fall, God affirmed that her childbirth experience would be painful. While the man was to have dominion over her she would desire to usurp his leadership role. In this case it is the woman who from the Fall onward will have a desire to rule over her husband. She will have a desire to control him and desire his headship. There would now be a built-in conflict within the family and society. This came about in divine retribution because she chose to act independently from him and disobey God's Word. Her husband also would be a ruler over her. This does not mean a loving leadership that accompanies God's initial plan for marriage and the treatment in general. His rule over her would be sinful and domineering. But just like Cain later the man and the woman had to master sin. Those who continued to turn away from God after Adam and Eve would follow the sinful and natural inclination that God gave to the relationship. Man would dominate woman and she would resist and seek to usurp his rule. Before the Fall she was subordinate to him but now the natural plan for their hierarchy would give way to dominance and resistance. God did provide for her though, but only to those who followed Him and kept His Word. God's plan is always best. Because of the gross sins of Israel God was placing women and children as leaders reversing His desired plan for the leadership hierarchy and therefore adding to the anarchy. The New testament provides the roles in which God has ordained.

Ephesians 5:22–25

²²Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; (ASV, 1901).

Next message: SIN'S AWARD IS EVIL

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