

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #7

Isaiah 3:1-15

There is absolutely no evidence that there is righteous government left anywhere on this earth. The closest you get to what would be called a “Christian nation” is the United States and our government is so unrighteous and it will actually protect your right to kill a baby or mock God. There is very little true justice in this country. A man can take a knife and kill his ex-wife and her friend and walk out of court a free man. Just ask O.J. Simpson. A man can invite a woman to his home and take a gun and shoot her in the head and walk out of court free. Just ask Phil Spector. A mother can drown her five children in a bathtub and be sentenced to get a little mental help through counseling. Our government will permit homosexuals to march down a main street and promote the fact that they are proud of their abominable sin. I would not really say we are a “Christian nation.” But it is not so important what I say; what is important is what God says. A text like this teaches us that we may be certain of one thing - God is paying close attention to these matters and eventually, His severe judgment will be poured out. In fact, I am convinced on the basis of these verses that God’s judgment is partially on us right now.

When we come to **Isaiah 3**, we come to a text that predicts a time when God is going to target Jerusalem and Judah with a very severe judgment. This prophecy was made somewhere around 750 B.C. and many Bible scholars believe it was, for the most part, fulfilled at the Babylonian captivity which took place in 586 B.C. led by Nebuchadnezzar. However, when we carefully analyze the specifics of what is predicted here, there is no doubt in my mind that this has a reference to the Great Tribulation, which I believe is very, very near.

We may observe that there are two “woe” judgments in chapter 3 (**3:9, 11**) and six more in chapter 5 (5:8, 11, 20, 21, 22). A “woe” judgment is the worst kind of judgment God gives. It is the most serious and severe. In the book of Revelation, the final three Trumpet judgments are called “woe” judgments (Rev. 8:13) and they bring God’s wrath to a vicious conclusion. The point Isaiah makes here is this:

BECAUSE OF ISRAEL’S REBELLION AND SIN AGAINST GOD, HE PROMISES TO SEND HIS SEVERE JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS OWN CITY AND HIS OWN PEOPLE.

Israel had brought God to His boiling point and God says, “I’ve had enough.” He literally sent Babylon as a judgment against Israel and He is on the verge of sending the worst judgment of all to her - the Great Tribulation. Now there are **six key prophetic facts** we learn here about the judgment of God, which are not only interesting and important, but they also are inspired:

PROPHETIC FACT #1 – God’s future judgment means He will remove many blessings.
3:1-7

Now I want us to observe, from **verse 1** that Isaiah uses the names Adonai and Jehovah of hosts at the beginning of this section. What this means is God is the sovereign, self-existing master over everything, including these judgments. There are specifically three blessings God promises to remove:

Removed Blessing #1 - God will remove physical supplies and physical support . **3:1**

During the Tribulation, Israel literally will pray the Kingdom prayer “give us this day our daily bread.” Isaiah predicts that a famine judgment would come upon Judah and Jerusalem that would be so severe that it would affect every loaf of bread and every sip of water. In fact, Jesus also spoke of this very thing in various places during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:7).

J. Vernon McGee observed that in the Bible there are 13 different famines that are mentioned (*Thru the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 197). Now contextually, the things mentioned here are specifically mentioned as occurring in close proximity to men hiding in caves, fleeing from the wrath of God (Isaiah 2:19, 21). We know from a study of Revelation that chronologically this occurs in the Tribulation at the sixth seal judgment (Rev. 6:15-17) and chapter 6 occurs just prior to chapter 7 when the program of God begins to swing specifically toward Israel, with the sealing of the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel (7:4).

Zechariah predicts during the Tribulation two thirds of Israel will die (Zechariah 13:8); Ezekiel tells us how they will die.

Now the prophet Ezekiel, who lived a couple hundred years after Isaiah predicted a future time when Israel would be sent a famine judgment by God (Ezekiel 5:16-17), that would be so severe that one third of the Jews would starve to death (Ezekiel 5:12a), one third would be killed by sword (Ezekiel 5:12b) and one third would escape and be scattered (Ezekiel 5:12c). He spoke of this specifically lasting for a total of 430 days, 390 days to pay for the sin of Israel and 40 days to pay for the sin of Judah and Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4:5-7). He said that during this time any food or even water would be measured in horror (Ezekiel 4:16-17).

We know that during the Great Tribulation, famine and thirst will literally kill millions (Rev. 7:16). We also know that midway through the Tribulation, Satan is going to target Israel in an attempt to destroy every Jew (Rev. 12:13-15). The Antichrist and the false prophet will take up residency in Jerusalem and will see to it that no one will be able to buy or sell without having his mark (Rev. 13:16-17). Jesus spoke of this time and warned the Jews that they needed to flee Jerusalem as fast as possible for terrible things will happen to Israel (Matt. 24:15-21). What Isaiah saw was this very judgment. God would remove His provisions and His protection. His generous supply and support will be lifted.

Do you think it is a coincidence that people are losing jobs all over the country and the world? From Michigan to North Carolina to Georgia, things are bleak. Our missionary to Spain just wrote and said that in the month of October, 6000 people per day lost their jobs.

When any nation, who has been so prosperous and has had such an abundance sees the economy caving in, it may know with certainty that it is a judgment that is carefully controlled and orchestrated by the sovereign hand of God. During the Tribulation, many will literally starve to death as a judgment of God all over the world and in Israel.

Removed Blessing #2 - God will remove leadership supervision. **3:2-4**

One of the sure signs of God's judgment is the removal of any solid, qualified leadership. William Kelly said, "What surer sign of decay and of imminent dissolution than the absence of all power among those who are in the place of authority, when those who should be the props of the state are children...in mind and purpose" (*An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, p. 106). Isaiah saw God's judgment that would remove any form of solid leadership whether it is military, civil, religious, business or emotional. Israel's leadership would fall apart because of His judgment. Any resemblance of good government would be removed by God.

When any nation, state, county, city, or church loses qualified leaders, it is a judgment of God. In this past election, I heard many say, we just don't seem to have any solid leaders who are qualified to be President. Do you think this is a coincidence? When Dick Larsen was here, he said he had some leaders from a church who did not know how to even lead any to faith in Jesus Christ. Do you think it is a coincidence that children are becoming more and more preeminent in what is called "worship"? This is a judgment of God and during the Tribulation, finding a leader who actually does know the truth will be very, very rare. In fact, Jesus said that for the most part all that will be left will be false prophets leading people in false directions (Matthew 24:11, 24) specifically as a judgment of God (II Thessalonians 2:11). In fact, Amos predicted that there would be a terrible famine and drought for the Word of God (Amos 8:11).

Removed Blessing #3 - God would permit internal disintegration. **3:5-7**

When Jesus taught on the subject of the Tribulation for Israel, He said that family members and friends will turn against each other. He said that brother would deliver up brother and a father would deliver up his own child and children would rise up against their own parents (Mark 13:12-14; Luke 21:16-17). Chronologically in Mark and in Luke, Jesus placed this as happening just before the Abomination of Desolation. So we would suggest that as the Tribulation moves toward the 3½ year point, any form of loyalty will disappear. Israel will be a desperate place. Food and water will be gone as well as the military and leaders and prophets.

What Isaiah is seeing is the time when people are so desperate in Jerusalem that they are turning against each other and looking for any who will help them or can lead them. Notice carefully from **verse 6** that things are so desperate during the Tribulation that a man is considered rich if he has a coat. But it will be too late for any help, for God's judgment has come.

Harmony is a wonderful blessing of God and lack of harmony is a terrible judgment of God.

PROPHETIC FACT #2 – God spells out specific reasons for His judgment. **3:8-9**

There are three reasons for God's judgment, which are spelled out here:

(Reason #1) - God's people have rebelled in speech. **3:8a**

Israel has mocked God with her speech especially in her verbal attack of Jesus Christ. He is her God and Messiah and she has continually verbally communicated just the opposite. During the Tribulation there will be terrible blasphemies against God (Rev. 13:5) and the Antichrist will sit in the temple of Jerusalem and say he is God (II Thess. 2:4). When people use their speech

to say things against God and Jesus Christ, it is just a matter of time until God will send His judgment. We live in a God-mocking world. We live in a world in which our political leaders say “we all worship the same God” whether Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism. What a terrible thing for leaders to say, when they consent that religious systems that make mockery of Jesus Christ are all the same.

(Reason #2) - God’s people have rebelled in actions . **3:8b**

Most people live their lives not concerned in the least as to how God views their speech and actions. But one day they will face the One whose eyes are as a “flame of fire” (Rev. 1:14). God views everything in regard to a relationship with Him. Israel is still not seeking God to this day. For the most part, they look to themselves. Their actions do not in any way speak of a trust and dependency on the Lord. In fact, as John Martin observed, “Everything the nation said and did was against her covenant God” (*Isaiah*, p. 1040).

The problem that Washington has and the problem that we have is that we have pretty much run God out of everything and every area of our lives. We act as if we are our own God and just ‘continue merrily along our way.’ If God is going to humble Israel, you can be certain He will humble the United States for the same reasons.

(Reason #3) - God’s people have rebelled in flaunting abominable sin . **3:9**

During the Tribulation, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit will be lifted and immoral behavior will rise as never before (Rev. 9:21; 17:2, 4, 5). There will be no attempt to even conceal the evil. They will do it blatantly and outwardly. Notice the sin of Sodom is named, which of course is homosexuality. Israel is going to see a rise in homosexuality that will be flaunted. We are already seeing it in the United States.

It used to be that those who were involved in this terrible sin did their best to conceal it. Every now and then it comes out that some favorite movie star or TV personality was actually given to this form of evil and it is so shocking because it was kept quiet. But not now.

One cannot help but think of what is happening right now in this country. Homosexuality is publicly flaunted with no fear or shame. There are homosexual parades and protests, which flaunt the sin. From the television to the military, people are not ashamed of sin, they proudly and arrogantly promote it and this will lead to the judgment of God.

Our economy is going down. Godly, stable, righteous leaders who know the Word of God are very rare. As a nation, we are on the verge of imploding and one reason God is causing all of this is because this country has flaunted and promoted the sin of Sodom.

PROPHETIC FACT #3 – God has a comforting word for the few who are righteous . **3:10**

Whenever God sends His judgment, those who are righteous have nothing to fear even during the Tribulation (Rev. 9:4).

Comforting Word #1 - Things will go well for the righteous. **3:10a**

When God's judgment comes, those who are righteous have nothing to fear.

Comforting Word #2 - Rewards will be given to the righteous. **3:10b**

The righteous will eat of the fruit of their ways. There is no question that during the Tribulation many Jews will die, but for those who did not take the mark of the beast, who believed on Jesus Christ, there have nothing to fear, for they die "in the Lord" and their "deeds follow with them." (Rev. 14:11-13). Now is the time to be more committed to Church (Heb. 10:24-25).

PROPHETIC FACT #4 – God has warnings for the wicked. **3:11**

People who are wicked tend to think their lifestyle is the way to happiness, when in all reality it is the way to destruction. There are two main warnings given here:

Warning #1 - It will go bad for the wicked. **3:11a**

If a person or a nation pursues that which is wicked, mark this point - it will not ever end up good for them. You have God's word on it.

Warning #2 - The wicked will receive what they deserve. **3:11b**

Make no mistake about this point; the Tribulation, which will destroy many Jewish people, is deserved by the majority of Jewish people. They deserve what they get. Hosea, who was a contemporary prophet of Isaiah to the northern section of Israel, said they deserved this because there was no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1). Instead there was swearing, deception, murder, stealing, adultery and bloodshed (Hosea 4:2). He said the Tribulation features "days of punishment and retribution" against Israel (Hosea 9:7).

Make no mistake about this point, any nation or individual who rejects God will receive a deserved judgment. You refuse to believe on Jesus Christ or refuse to face up to sin and you will get what you deserve. You have God's word on that point and so does Israel.

PROPHETIC FACT #5 – God will permit unqualified leaders to rule over His people. **3:12**

Judgment #1 - God will permit children to oppress His people.

Judgment #2 - God will permit women to lead His people.

Judgment #3 - God will permit confusion to govern His people.

I find it interesting that when Edward Young wrote his commentary on Isaiah many years ago, he said he couldn't see a time when literally children and women were in leadership positions so this probably was not to be taken literally (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, pp. 155-156). It is a shame that Dr. Young wasn't alive today, for he would see that this point literally is true. I am amazed at the number of times children are polled to get their opinions and views on life's issues, when in fact, they are in no position to determine much of anything. And as far as women ruling, just look at various political and ecclesiastical leadership roles.

During the Tribulation, Israel will literally see children and women leading her. **When children and women are leading nations, states and churches, it is a judgment of God.** People may think it is so progressive and so entertaining and cute to be led by children and women, but in God's mind it is disastrous. J. Vernon McGee said the women's lib movement wouldn't like Isaiah and neither would they like him, nor will they like me either.

When women are trying to act in the role of a man, they are not ascending up in the mind of God, they are descending down. God has designed wonderful roles for both men and women and He expects those roles to be fulfilled.

People will never be led in a true reverence and understanding of God's Word by children and women; they will be led to confusion. This is not what I say; this is what Isaiah said.

PROPHETIC FACT #6 – God will hold religious leaders accountable for bringing about His judgment. **3:13-15**

The elders and the leaders of Israel let the nation get into its depraved state and never taught them any different. The Scribes and the Pharisees led Israel down the wrong path and today the Rabbis are doing the same thing.

While we were on vacation, we visited the third oldest Jewish synagogue in the United States, which has conducted services in the same location since 1733 in Savannah, Georgia. I asked our Jewish tour guide, if they ever went through a book of the Bible, like Isaiah. He said, "No." When I asked him why, he responded by saying it is much easier for the Rabbis to read the law and go through the rituals than to teach us verse-by-verse through any Bible book. I would hate to be the Jewish leaders who have refused to teach Israel truth God gave to her. These religious leaders have taken their money and made their living by reading the law and by conducting religious ceremony, but they have not taught the people the Word of God. Israel needs to know the book of Isaiah, because these prophecies are aimed straight at her. So do we!

I personally believe we are on the verge of these things happening to Israel and before they do, we will be raptured. I also believed that in many ways right now we are under the judgment of God in the United States. But remember what Isaiah said right here - "say to the righteous that it will go well with them" (**3:10**); you have nothing to fear.