

ISAIAH 3

IT SHALL BE WELL WITH THE RIGHTEOUS!

This chapter and the next are a continuation of the sermon that the Prophet began in chapter 2, in which he promised the Lord's judgment upon the sins of the people. And here in these first eleven verses, we find more threatenings of ruin. Not only does the Prophet predict famine and thirst, but he also foretells that the Lord would "take away the mighty man, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent, the ancient, the captain of fifty, the honourable man, the counsellor, the cunning artificer, the eloquent orator" (verses 2-3). It is the greatest calamity to a country when its distinguished men are thus removed! (Ecc. 10:16-17) Brave warriors, able diplomats, and wise statesmen are God's gifts to a nation. No human contrivance can produce them, for God Himself raises them up just at the time when He has some great work for them to do. This is how He raised up men like Gideon and Jephthah to be Judges for the Israelites. And this is how the Lord has continued to work for many nations, to this day. Those who read history may easily call examples to mind. For instance, William Tell was raised up to give freedom to Switzerland, the Prince of Orange was ordained to establish liberty and Protestantism in Holland, and Washington was called to establish the American republic. Let us pray to God to raise up great and good leaders in our land – men who shall guide our affairs with discretion, and who shall be ready to act with wisdom and courage if circumstances of difficulty arise!

The Lord here threatens national judgments upon Judah, which would ruin the country. And some of His own people would surely have been afraid that they would be included in that ruin; and therefore, God told the Prophet to comfort them against those fears (verse 10). No matter what happened to the unrighteous nation, the child of God would not be lost in the crowd of sinners; for the Judge of all the earth will not slay the righteous with the wicked (Gen. 18:25). The righteous person is here assured, in God's name, that "it shall be well with him." He shall have Divine supports and comforts which shall abound as afflictions increase, and so "it shall be well with him." Even when the support of daily bread is taken away, yet the righteous shall be satisfied in the day of famine; "they shall eat the fruit of their doings." Because they have been redeemed by Jesus, they shall have the testimony of their clear consciences that they kept themselves pure from the common iniquity; and therefore, the common calamity will not be the same thing to them that it is to others.

On the other hand, some of the wicked might entertain a hope that they would escape the Lord's judgments; and therefore, He bade the Prophet to shake

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Lord threatens calamities upon the land – verses 1-7
- ❖ A record of the sins that provoked the Lord to these dealings – verses 8-9, 12-26
- ❖ Isaiah is directed to speak to both the righteous and the wicked – verses 10-11

their vain hopes. “Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him!” (verse 11) It will grow worse and worse with them if they do not repent, and the worst of all will be at the end; for the reward of their hands shall be given them in that day when every person shall be judged according to his actions.

Verses 12-26 describe the sins among the higher classes of the Israelites – especially their foolish vanity, and their lack of consideration for the poor. We find a somewhat similar description in James 5:1-7. We may contrast this passage here in Isaiah with our Lord’s words in Matthew 20:26-28. The place of highest rank is the place of greatest responsibility, and it ought to be the place of the utmost self-denial and the greatest usefulness. When God raises a person above their fellows, either in wealth or in position, they are raised in order that they may be a blessing to those around them. If they use the Lord’s gifts as a means of separation from their poorer fellow-creatures, instead of as a bond of union with them; then they may be sure that He will enter into judgment with them for it – as it is foretold in the 13th verse: “The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.”

The latter verses of this chapter contain a curious list of the ornaments which the Jewish women wore in Isaiah’s day, over 2,700 years ago. Many ornaments which are quite as old (and even older), from Egypt and Italy, are in our possession today – such as bracelets, necklaces, headbands, and earrings. They are generally found in the graves, where they seem to have been placed when their owners were buried. As they lay by the side of the decaying skeletons of those whom they once adorned, they seemed to have been a solemn mockery of the crumbling dust – bearing loud but silent witness against the folly of all who have spend money and thought upon the adorning of such perishable tabernacles of clay. This does not mean that sin is *necessarily* connected with the use of jewelry, any more than with the use of many other beautiful things which God has given us in this world; however, the Lord reproves the misuse of these things for the purposes of pride and vanity. The Christian woman’s real beauty is to be found in “the hidden man of the heart,” and in “a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:3-4). These are precious ornaments indeed – not for the perishing body, but for the immortal soul!



Instead of his own filthy rags, every sinner who comes to Jesus receives from Him a robe of spotless righteousness; and being clothed therein, he becomes well-pleasing to the Lord. And with many precious jewels of Christian grace – such as faith, hope, and love – the Savior further adorns him. To the poor, returning prodigal, He gives the best robe and the ring and the shoes! (Luke 15:22) Let each of us ask our Redeemer to freely give us these precious things!

We praise You, Lord, for the inexhaustible riches of Your grace; for although thousands have already been enriched by You, there is more than enough for us! Amen.