

“Jerusalem Stumbled and Judah is Fallen”

Isaiah 3:1-26

Sunday, July 10th, 2022

Listen to this eyewitness account of how some members of the German church reacted to the Nazism of their times. Put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself - *“What would I have done?”*

“I lived in Germany during the Nazi Holocaust. I considered myself a Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it because, *what could anyone do to stop it?*

A railroad track ran behind our small church and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance and then the wheel coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sound of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews enroute to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

Years have passed and no one talks about it anymore. But I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. God forgive me; forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians yet did nothing to intervene.”

What would you have done? Be careful how you answer that - the question could be asked of you what you are doing concerning our modern day American holocaust - the multi-directional assault on the Church and Christian morality in the public square.

Today is the third installment of our new sermon series on the Old Testament book of Isaiah which I've titled, “The Holy One of Israel.” As one of our members remarked to me late last week, while she read through **Isaiah Chapter 3**, “There's not much positive.” That's true - we are seeing the promised judgment of God coming upon His people. “Far from Jerusalem being the stable city magnetic to the world, it is itself falling apart.” (Motyer, *Isaiah by the Day*, 25)

We'll begin by reading the first seven verses of **Isaiah Chapter 3** as they make up the first main point for this text.

Isaiah 3:1-7:

"For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;

2 The mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder;

3 The captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter.

4 "I will give children *to be* their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

5 The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; The child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable."

6 When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, *saying*, "You have clothing; you be our ruler, and *let* these ruins *be* under your power,"

7 In that day he will protest, saying, "I cannot cure *your* ills, for in my house *is* neither food nor clothing; do not make me a ruler of the people."

MP 1 - The Fall of a Nation (v. 1-7);

MP 2 - The Cause of the Fall of a Nation (v. 8-15);

MP 3 - A Case in Point - the Daughters of Zion (v. 16-26).

The chapter opens with God doing something toward Jerusalem and Judah. He is dismantling their world as they knew it - it is the **Fall of a Nation**. First, God took away the most fundamental items necessary for the maintenance of their society - food and water (v. 1).

God also took away their leaders, whether they were military, political, or spiritual as we see in verses 2 and 3. Specifically, God took away, "The mighty man (hero) and the man of war (soldier), the judge and the prophet, and the diviner (soothsayer) and the elder; **3** The captain of fifty and the honorable man (man of rank), the counselor and the skillful artisan (craftsman), and the expert (clever) enchanter (expert in charms). A society without skilled, tried leadership is not long for this world.

In place of the leadership God was taking away from Judah, He appointed mere babes. Look again at verses 4 and 5 - "I will give children *to be* their princes (*NIV* puts it this way - "I will make boys their officials;"), and babes (infants; mere children!) shall rule over them. **5** The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child (youth) will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable."

The collective use of boys, infants, mere children, and youth refer to people who lack the maturity or the moral authority to administer the nation in a just way. The result will be anarchy.

Consider Rehoboam's folly in **I Kings Chapter 12-14**. Rehoboam was the son and successor of King Solomon, the last king to claim the throne of old Israel and the first king of Judah after the kingdom was divided in two - 10 tribes made up the Northern

Kingdom (Israel) and 2 tribes were the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Jeroboam was the first king of Israel.

The leaders of Israel summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. "Your father was a hard master; lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we will be your loyal subjects." Rehoboam replied, "Give me three days to think this over. Then come back for my answer."

King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he asked. "How should I answer these people?" The older counselors replied, "If you are willing to be a servant to these people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects."

But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. "What is your advice?" he asked them. "How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?"

The young men replied, "This is what you should tell those complainers who want a lighter burden: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!'"

Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to hear Rehoboam's decision, just as the king had ordered. But Rehoboam spoke harshly to the people, for he rejected the advice of the older counselors and followed the counsel of his younger advisers. He told the people, "My father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!"

This took place as it was God's will. Rehoboam did not begin his reign well; neither did he end well. "During Rehoboam's reign, the people of Judah did what was evil in the Lord's sight, provoking his anger with their sin, for it was even worse than that of their ancestors. For they also built for themselves pagan shrines and set up sacred pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. There were even male and female shrine prostitutes throughout the land. The people imitated the detestable practices of the pagan nations the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites." (**I Kings 14:22-24**).

Verses 6 & 7 of Isaiah Chapter 3 reveal the desperation the people of Judah were experiencing. To fill the void of leadership, those simply wearing the right clothing were considered qualified to lead. "You have clothing; you be our ruler!" (v. 6). *The response?* "Do not make me a ruler of the people." (v. 7) Judah was sinking quickly.

With verses 8-15, we see the **cause of the fall of a nation**:

8 - For Jerusalem stumbled, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory.

9 - The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide *it*. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves.

10 - "Say to the righteous that *it shall be well with them*, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. **11** - Woe to the wicked! *It shall be ill with him*, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

12 - As for My people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause *you* to err, and destroy the way of your paths."

13 - The Lord stands up to plead, and stands to judge the people. **14** - The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of His people and His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; The plunder of the poor *is* in your houses. **15** - What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the faces of the poor?" says the Lord God of hosts."

Isaiah calls Judah out because of her sin against God. Several things took place in this section of Scripture that caused the fall of Judah and Jerusalem:

- (v. 8) - Judah did not worship God with their words and ways. "their tongue and their doings *are* against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory." Their speech was careless; symptomatic of unconverted hearts.
- (v. 9) - They had no shame. "...they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide *it*. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves." Judah was proud of her sin rather than repenting over it. This is the third mention thus far in the first three chapters of Isaiah of the city of "Sodom." (**Isaiah 1:9, 10, and 3:9**). *What was Sodom's sin?* Look up "sodomy" in a Dictionary - it will mention "unnatural (homosexual) copulation." **Genesis Chapter 19:5-7** provides a Biblical description concerning the men of Sodom: "They shouted to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!' So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. 'Please, my brothers,' he begged, 'don't do such a wicked thing.'" The sin of Sodom was not poor hospitality; rather it was same sex sexuality. And, it is described in **Genesis Chapter 19** as "a wicked thing!"
- (v. 12) - Weak male leadership - "children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them."
- (v. 14-15) - they abused the poor - "plundered them, crushed them, and ground their faces."

Finally, Isaiah provides a **case in point with verses 16-26 of Isaiah Chapter 3**. He charges the daughters of Zion (women who should have known better) with arrogance and flirty eyes. Like the men (very likely their husbands), they were mis-placing their confidence. Rather than focusing upon their appearance, they should have been repenting and putting on the robe of righteousness.

16 - Moreover the Lord says: 'Because the daughters of Zion are haughty (prideful), and walk with outstretched necks and wanton (flirty) eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet,

17 - Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, And the Lord will uncover their secret parts. **18** - In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; **19** - the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; **20** - the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the

charms, **21** and the rings; the nose jewels, **22** the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, **23** - and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench;

instead of a sash, a rope;

Instead of well-set hair, baldness;

Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;

And branding instead of beauty.

25 - Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war. **26** - Her gates shall lament and mourn, and she *being* desolate shall sit on the ground.”

Godly women do not strut around so everyone can get a good look at them. They are not seductive, but instead are discreet. The godly woman doesn't flaunt her wealth before others. She finds her beauty in godliness, not in braided hair, fine clothes, and jewelry. This doesn't mean she has to dress down drab or make herself look unattractive in order to please God. Just don't fixate on it!

I'll ask some questions of application to help us personalize our response:

- If you are in a position of leadership (that's more positions than you may think - work supervisors, elders, law enforcement, parents, teachers, court officials), *do you lead with maturity and integrity?*
- What does your speech say about your relationship with God?
- *Do you say you're a Christian, though your words are laced with profanity?*
- *Are you guilty of the sin of Sodom?*
- How do you minister to the poor, or those less fortunate than you?
- *Do you persecute the poor - plundering, crushing, and grinding them?*
- Consider how do your sins impact your nation. Or your family, your church, your workcenter, your community.

Isaiah Chapter 3 shows how a nation can fall and what causes that fall. Even if it is populated with God's people.

A lady who had been on the Titanic before it sank said that the people who were on deck were getting pieces of ice from the iceberg, throwing them around, and even putting them in their drinks. People can be so close to judgment or disaster and yet not know.