

(Isaiah) Sin's Judgment and God's Restoration

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores Isaiah's prophecy of judgment against Judah, emphasizing the consequences of ungodly leadership and the importance of repentance.

Duration: 48:54

Scripture: Isaiah 3:1-5, Isaiah 3:24 - 4:3, Isaiah 4:6

Topics: "Economic Justice", "Social Responsibility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of economic injustice and unfair treatment of the poor. He emphasizes the importance of being fair and treating others justly, as this is what God would want. The speaker highlights the arrogance and haughtiness of the daughters of Zion, who exploit the disadvantaged for their own gain. He warns that such behavior will lead to severe consequences, including disgrace, baldness, and even death. The speaker also criticizes the government's involvement in state-sponsored gambling and lotteries, which he sees as a way of exploiting the poor and giving them false hope.

Transcript

Tonight we begin in Isaiah chapter 3, and Isaiah chapter 3 continues a prophecy that started in chapter 2. Isaiah chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 all deal with a prophecy made against the southern kingdom of Judah in the days of Isaiah. Let's begin starting to read, picking up this prophecy at the beginning of chapter 3, verse 1. 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, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan and the expert enchanter. I will give children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them.

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. 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 hand.

And that day he will protest, saying, I cannot cure your ills. When my house is neither food nor clothing, do not make me a ruler of the people. God here is saying that he's bringing judgment upon the southern kingdom of Judah.

And the aspect of that judgment that he's dealing with here has to do with shortages. I remember when I was younger, the 1970s, where there was gas shortages and meat shortages and this shortage and that shortage. Here, God prophesies that he's going to bring judgment of shortages upon Judah.

There will be a shortage of food, there will be a shortage of water, and there will be a shortage of competent leadership in the nation. First of all, he says he's going to take away from Jerusalem and from Judea the stock and the store. God's judgment on Judah at this point includes taking away their food and their water.

But the judgment is even worse than that. God also brought judgment on Jerusalem and Judah by depriving them of godly, competent leaders on every level. Did you notice here? The mighty man, the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner, the elder, the captain of 50, and the honorable man, the counselor and the skilled artisan, the expert enchanter.

Instead of wise, competent leaders, God would give them instead, if you look at verse 4, children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them. An eventual fulfillment of this prophecy was found in 2 Kings chapter 24. It says, also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem, all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives and all the craftsmen and smiths.

None remained except the poorest people of the land. Now, this principle of God's judgment remains to this day. See, my friends, one way that God may bring judgment on a nation is to curse them with incompetent, ungodly leaders.

Often, this is the simplest avenue of judgment. God just gives a nation the leaders that they want. The leaders that their wicked hearts desires.

Now, what I find interesting about this is this crisis of leadership can happen even in economically prosperous times. Keep your finger there in Isaiah chapter 3. Look back at chapter 2, verse 7. This is the current time of Judah that he's talking about. It says their land is also full of silver and gold and there's no end of their treasures.

Their land is full of horses. There's no end of their chariots. Boy, it's the economic boom times in Judah.

And the kings came to office campaigning on the slogan, It's the economy, stupid. That's what matters. And they were elected on that ticket and everything was great, prosperous, wonderful.

But God says, My judgment is upon you and I'm going to bring a scarcity and the other thing I'm going to make scarce is competent, good leadership. And the terrible effect of this judgment of God, the granting of a competent and ungodly leaders may not be immediately seen. After all, times were good, right? But it will be certainly seen apart from the repentance of a nation and the mercy of God.

Isn't it funny how some people wonder if a book thousands of years old has any application to today? My, my. And my friends, if you can't look at our nation and I'm not talking about any one particular political party. Believe me.

Who, where is the competent leader in our nation? In our state? Even more on local levels, where are the competent civic and political leaders? If you can't see the hand of the judgment of God in this, if you can't see the hand of the judgment of giving the nation the leaders they want, the leaders they deserve. And right now, nobody seems to be suffering too badly from it. Right? Prosperous times, America is presently

in an amazing stretch of prosperity.

But you just can't help but think that it's a house of cards and that the seeds that are sown now, the oftentimes amoral leadership of our nation, that seems to have one goal, actually two goals. Number one, get in power. Number two, stay in power.

And that's about it. Everything else is out the window. Because of this ungodly, incompetent leadership in Judah, look what will happen.

In verse five, the people will be oppressed. In addition to that, there will be a breakdown of order in society. Did you see that in verse five? The child will be insolent towards the elder and the base towards the honorable.

Friends, when things are bad among the leaders, it has a definite trickle-down effect to the nation. Or I don't know, perhaps it's more likely to say that it's a trickle-up effect. I'll tell you this right off the bat.

That what goes on in our house is more important than what goes on in the White House. And we should be more concerned with that. But what goes on in the White House is really just an amplification of what goes on in the houses of America all across the nation.

And we see this breakdown of order in society. Things will become so bad that in the minds of the people, the smallest achievements will qualify a man for leadership. Did you see what the qualification for leadership is in verse six? A man takes hold of his brother and the house of his father saying, You have clothing, you'll be our ruler.

You've got a nice suit, we'll elect you. Of course, that's about the basis on which people seem to elect people today. You'll be our ruler.

And let these ruins be under your hand. Yet even such a man will not want to leave. Look at what he responds in verse seven.

He's protesting, he says, I can't fix anything. Don't put me in the position of power. Friends, it's a remarkable, remarkable prophecy that Isaiah gives regarding the southern kingdom of Judah.

But why? Why are they so ripe for judgment? Look at verse eight. For Jerusalem stumbled and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory. 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 brought evil upon themselves.

Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with them, for the reward of his hand shall be given him. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.

Oh, my people, those who lead you cause you to err and destroy the way of your paths. Did you notice in verse eight what the sin of Jerusalem and Judah was? They sinned in what they say and in what they do. It says their tongues and their doings are against the Lord.

In fact, verse eight goes on to say that what they say and what they do provoke the eyes of His glory. Now, it's much easier to think that what we do could be offensive to God than to think that what we say can be offensive to the Lord. Friends, do you realize that you are commanded by God just as much to glorify Him by what you say as you are to glorify Him by what you do? Jesus said, For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. A lot of times we think what we say doesn't matter. It's just what we do.

Now, believe me, what you do matters. I'm not trying to minimize that. What you say matters also.

But can I say it's not just what you say. It's not just what you do. Can I add a third thing? It's how you look.

Oh, well, good. I took a long time getting prepared for tonight. No, that's not what I mean.

Look here at verse nine. The look on their countenance witnesses against them. Do you know what that means? It means the very look on their faces is evidence of their guilt.

Either they have the smirk of the reprobate or the downcast gaze of those people under conviction. But you look at their faces, and it's got sin written all over it. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? You've seen a face like that at times, right? Sometimes you see it in the mirror, don't you? It's the face that has sin written all over it.

And God says, I see it. I see it on your face. Matter of fact, it says in verse nine that they declare their sin as Sodom.

They do not hide it. Their sin is openly displayed, and they have no sense of shame. The cultural dynamic in Isaiah's day was probably much the same as in our time.

You know, in the name of frankness or honesty, and let's not all be hypocrites, all kinds of sin is approved, and no one is allowed, so to speak, to proclaim a standard unless you live up to it perfectly. Friends, that's a false idea. That's an ungodly idea.

You see, outward decency is important. It's important not to talk about many sins, even though they exist and sometimes touch the church. It's through these means that God's people declare a standard even though they or the world do not perfectly measure up to that standard.

Let me remind you of what Ephesians 5, verse 12 says. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. Israel didn't care about that.

If you notice here, it says, and they declare their sin as Sodom. They won't shut up about it. On and on, talking about their sin.

You know, one of the most destructive lies of our time is that it is wrong or hypocritical if you hold a standard that you don't live up to. Let me illustrate what I mean by this. There is nobody in this room who has always told the truth.

Everybody in this room has told a lie. I know that. You know that.

It's just a fact. Now, based on the way that some people consider morality today, you can't tell your children not to lie. After all, you've lied, haven't you? How can you tell your children not to lie? You've told a lie.

Friends, we believe in the standard that you should not lie. And just because there's not a single person in this room who has perfectly lived up to that standard, we're not going to throw the standard away. The idea that you abandon standards if you can't live up to them is bogus.

That way of thinking is just as responsible for the moral decay and decline in our culture as any other thing. We agree that we should have a high standard. We agree that we should live by a standard that is impossible for us to live up to perfectly, but it's still our standard.

And when we're wrong by it, we're wrong by it. But we're not going to throw away the standard. Friends, it would be wrong and destructive to answer in that kind of situation, you can't tell your child not to lie.

You've lied in the past. You're a hypocrite. This attitude in our society translates into a certain result, and that is the wholesale lowering of standards.

By the way, might I say that the charge of hypocrisy in that situation is just plain false. It is not hypocritical to promote a standard that you don't perfectly meet. Hypocrisy is when you pretend to keep that standard perfectly, but you don't.

Or hypocrisy is when you think it's fine for you to not keep the standard, but everybody else has to. That's hypocrisy. But it's not hypocrisy to say, for example, we should tell the truth.

I don't do it all the time, but we should tell the truth. Friends, that's just biblical thinking. It's important that we maintain an external decency.

Now, it should have a correlation to an internal decency. There's something wrong when we say, well, let's just let it all hang out. No, no.

Let's stop letting it all hang out, please. Let's rein it back in. Let's not be, as they say in verse 9, and they declare their sin as Sodom.

As a matter of fact, it says in verse 9, Woe to their soul, for they have brought evil on themselves. God did not have to do anything unique or special to bring this judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. All they had to do was leave them alone and allow them to have brought evil upon themselves.

Friends, when the Lord gives a nation the leadership they desire and deserve, it's either a blessing or a curse. In Judah's case, in the time of Isaiah, it was a curse. In our days, at the end of the 20th century, it's a curse.

God didn't have to do anything special. He just gives you what you want. Gives the nation what they want.

It's ungodly leadership. But the righteous will be preserved. Verse 10, Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they'll eat the fruit of their doings.

Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hand shall be given him. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. Friends, that's not taken to be a blessing.

Again, the Lord is declaring and bemoaning His judgment on Judah because they've been given incompetent and ungodly leadership. He says, Those who lead you cause you to err and destroy the way of your paths. And as part of that, if you notice there in verse 12, it says, Children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.

Friends, this was seen as a curse, not a blessing. Now, certainly, God may raise up particular women at particular times to be leaders in different spheres. Deborah, in Judges chapters 4 and 5, is a marvelous example of this.

Esther, in the book of Esther, is another marvelous example of this. But it's entirely different than a society where, in general, women rule over them. Such a society is cursed, not blessed.

I think there's a lot of just wrong thinking about this in society. Not anti-woman or anti-man thinking, just realities. Did you know that there really hasn't been a truly matriarchal society? I was reading about one of these supposedly matriarchal societies in the newspaper a couple months back.

They were talking about some culture on the front page of the Los Angeles Times, about some tribal group in Mongolia. It's supposed to be the shining example of a matriarchal society because the women don't tie themselves down with marriages. They choose their lovers and they just cohabit for a while and have a baby.

They seem to lead in a lot of the civic and social kind of institutions and such. You start reading the article and it sounds like, man, this is a society run by women! This is amazing! And then you keep reading. And then you come around and decide, well, what do the men do? You know what the men do? They sit around playing board games all day, smoking tobacco and telling the women to get them things.

And somehow they thought that this is a society being run by women. Hello? It's a sight for a lazy man, that's for sure. But they're still running the show, making the women wait on them.

It's just amazing how they could kind of promote, hey, boy, the women are really running things. Yeah, like slave labor is how they're running things. Good heavens.

But friends, this isn't because men are smarter than women. But I think it's in particular relevant to the church. It says here, as for my people, children are their presses and women rule over them.

We talked about this a lot when we talked through the book of 1 Timothy, verse by verse. And we could recommend to you the tapes from that passage if you're interested in this talk. But God is very interested in an order of authority in the church.

It's an order of authority that is founded on reasons found in the Scriptures, not on cultural or chauvinistic reasons. Going on now, verse 13. By the way, ladies, I hope you didn't take offense at that.

Because there's a lot worse coming in this chapter. I'm just, I'm thinking, man. Verse 13.

The Lord stands up to plead and to judge the people. The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of his people, with his princes. For you've eaten up the vineyard, the plunder of the poor is in your houses.

What do you mean by crushing my people? And grinding the faces of the poor, says the Lord God of hosts. It's interesting, it says the Lord stands up to plead and stands to judge his people. Here the Lord is both a prosecutor.

He stands up to plead. And the judge. He stands to judge his people.

Friends, can I just tell you that it's going to be a bad day in court when the prosecutor is also the judge and you're the defendant? That's the situation here for Judah. And what's their crime? The plunder of the poor is in your houses. They've been crushing the people and grinding the faces of the poor.

God's charge against the elders and the princes of Israel is not that they have failed to help the poor. That would be bad enough in itself. His charge against the elders and the leaders of Israel is that they have robbed the poor and taken advantage of their poverty to enrich themselves.

When I think about this, I can't help but think about things like state-sponsored gambling. Lotteries and such. Isn't this a way the government grinds the poor? Lays in front of them a false hope of riches.

And just takes money from them. It's sad. And you think about these things and how our own culture has to stand before God on this.

Friends, don't grind people when they're in a place of economic disadvantage. Don't make riches at their expense. Treat them fairly.

Be fair. That's what God would say. But this is what Judah was not doing.

Verse 16, Moreover, the Lord says, because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and with crooked feet, and with wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet, 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. And that day the Lord will take away the finery, the jingling anklets, the scarves, the crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils, the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands, the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings, the nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles, the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors, the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes. See, there was a problem among the women of Judah.

They were proud. They were taken with themselves, and they loved to consider themselves better than others. It says there in verse 16, they were haughty.

The daughters of Zion were haughty. And this proud heart was the basis for the rest of their sin. They had a proud heart.

You know, in contrast, women of God are called to be in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. That's about the opposite of being haughty, isn't it? Esteeming others better than yourself. That wasn't all.

It wasn't just pride. But if you notice in verse 16, it also says that they have wanton eyes. The women of Judah were sexually seductive and promiscuous.

They wanted to behold and attract what was sexually impure. It's talking about shameless flirting and impure pursuits. In contrast to this, women of God are called to be, as Titus 2.5 says, discreet and chaste.

Let those two words sink in. Discreet and chaste. It wasn't just that.

They had a haughty, proud spirit. They had wanton eyes. But then if you also notice here, in verse 16 it says, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet.

See, the bottom line is that the women of Judah were obsessed with finery, luxury, and accessories. They devoted far too much of their lives to their appearance and their image. Now for emphasis, the prophet declares a list of the accessories and luxury items that the women of Judah longed for and devoted too much of their lives to.

Should I read it again? I don't know, ladies. I don't know if you're making a checklist as I'm going through this, thinking about what's at home. The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils, the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands, the perfume boxes, the charms, the rings, the nose jewels, the festal apparel, the mantles, the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors, the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

Oh, praise the Lord, I don't have a turban. I don't know, it sounds to me like they have some pretty good malls in Jerusalem after reading that list. My friends, the love of finery, of luxury, and the obtaining of it all, it's not unique to women.

Many men have a problem with it also. But it is definitely a problem among many women. A 1992 story in the Los Angeles Times told about Michelle, a successful writer and editor, who feared the day when her husband might discover her secret stash of credit cards, her secret post office box, and other tricks that she used to hide how much money she spent shopping for herself.

This is what she said. I make as much money as my husband. If I want a \$500 suit from Ann Taylor, I deserve it, and don't want to be hassled about it.

So the easiest thing to do is to lie. Last year, when her husband forced her to destroy one of her credit cards, Michelle just went out and got a new one without telling him. This is what she says.

I live in fear. If he discovers this new visa, he'll kill me. In the same article, the school teacher explained more.

She said, Men just don't understand that shopping is our drug of choice, she joked, even while admitting that some months, some months, her salary goes exclusively to paying the minimum balance on her credit cards. This is what she says. Walking through the door of South Coast Plaza is like walking through the gates of heaven.

God made car trunks for women to hide shopping bags in. The young professional named Mary explained, Shopping is my recreation. It's my way of pampering myself.

When you walk into a mall and see all the stores, it's like something takes over and you get caught up in it. Indeed. Now, I think we need to be careful that we don't guard ourselves or justify ourselves saying, well, I'm glad I'm not that bad.

Probably not a single person in this room is that bad. But wouldn't the Lord have us have some perspective on these things in our lives? Honestly, ladies, and men too, if the shoe fits, it doesn't matter what gender you are, but if the shoe fits, wear it. It doesn't matter what gender you are, but it does matter, are you just pouring an inappropriate measure of your life into your appearance and the things, and the things you have, and the things you want to get? The little baubles or trinkets or gadgets or whatever you want to call it.

You can just devote a completely inappropriate portion of your life to these things and the women of Judah, the daughters of Zion, were doing it and it angered the Lord. In contrast, women of God are commanded this in 1 Peter chapter 3. Do not let your adornment be merely outward, arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel. Rather, let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God.

Ladies, you all look attractive, but how about that gentle and quiet spirit? Is that what somebody would say when they look at you? There's a woman of a gentle and a quiet spirit. Now, if not, but if they'd say, well, my, she dresses attractively, then why not take this recommendation? Don't change any of the time that you spend making yourself attractive. Just equal it with the same measure of time that you spend before the Lord, seeking a gentle and a quiet spirit.

You say, well then, I don't have enough hours in the day. Well, balance it out somehow. Balance it out somehow.

Because that gentle and quiet spirit really will make you a far more attractive person than any of the kind of baubles or makeup or whatever else you can do. You see, their obsession with their appearance, their love of luxury, and their promiscuity made the daughters of Zion ripe for judgment. Look at what it says in verse 17.

Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the daughters of Zion and the Lord will uncover their secret parts. You want a crown? The Lord says, here's your crown. I'll put a scab on your head.

And instead of being beautifully adorned, they'll be exposed and humiliated. And it says, the Lord will take away the finery. Now, in Isaiah's time, these judgments were connected with the coming invasions.

Because of scarcity and disease, the daughters of Zion would be sick and diseased. They'd be raped and humiliated. And all their wonderful accessories would be taken away.

Friends, it's just plain important. And might I make a special appeal to the ladies? Because of your role in society, because you have a greater role in the nurture of children, it's all the more important that women of God live and think like women of God. Friends, it's bad when men in the culture become degenerate.

It's even worse when women in the culture feel that they, in the name of equality or whatever you want to say, need to match men in their degeneracy. Because, friends, when the women of a culture become degenerate, then hope for the next generation is gone. Who's going to raise the godly seed? But I'll say this.

When the women of a culture turn to the Lord and His ways, then there's great hope for the future. You look at the families in our church family. And you say, there is great hope for the future.

You see godly women raising up a godly heritage unto the Lord. And you say, thank you, Jesus. That's how it should be.

This is what John Calvin said on this passage. By the way, I have you know that I restrain myself from reading several more very juicy and convicting quotes by Calvin, but I'll just read this one. In short, both men and women are instructed to make a sober use of the gifts of God, both in food and in clothing and in their whole conduct of life, for the Lord cannot endure extravagance and absolutely must inflict severe punishment on account of it, for it cannot be restrained by a lighter chastisement.

He continues on here, verse 24. And so it shall be, instead of a sweet smell, there will be a stench, instead of a sash or rope, instead of well-set hair or baldness, instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth, and branding instead of beauty. Your young men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in the war.

Her gates shall lament and mourn and she being desolate shall sit on the ground. Do you notice the theme here in verses 24 through 26? The Lord will replace their finery with the marks of captivity and humiliation. They will live the stench.

They will live the baldness. They will live the branding and the general deprivation of captivity. Do we realize how quickly God can take it all away? How much more reason to honor God with what we have instead of indulging ourselves.

You notice there in verse 25, He says, Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty in the war. Without doubt, one of the reasons why the daughters of Zion loved all the finery, why they loved all the luxury, was because it made them more attractive to men. That's why I'll wear all these things.

It will make me more attractive to men. They felt that they could get men that way. But their ungodly love of luxury and their ungodly love of finery, what did it result in? The loss of their men.

The captivity came and the men were cut down by the sword. The very thing they wanted they ended up losing because they were focused on the wrong thing. So it says, verse 26, She being desolate shall sit on the ground.

That was a position of humility and brokenness for a Jewish person. On to chapter 4, verse 1. It really continues on right on to verse 1. It says, And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel. Only let us be called by your name to take away our reproach.

And all the men said, Praise the Lord. What? Seven women to one man? Is that what they're saying? No, this is a curse of God. Why are there seven women to one man? Well, because the men have been killed in war.

They've been carried away to captivity. As a result of the judgments of the Lord detailed in Isaiah, the daughters of Zion have few men to choose from as husbands. So many men fell by the sword that seven women would chase after one man.

And they'd be so desperate for marriage that they would not expect their husbands to provide for them at all. We'll provide for ourselves. No, you don't need to do anything for us.

Just let us have your name and take away our reproach. The idea is give us children. It would be enough simply to take the name of a husband and take away the reproach of being unmarried and childless.

Interesting, it shows here in verse 1, women too desperate for marriage. That's a tragic place, isn't it? Probably many of us have seen that with our eyes. We see women who are too desperate for marriage and they marry unwisely and for the wrong reasons.

They don't think about things before they get married. And this is part of the judgment that God says comes upon Judah because of their sinful conduct. But in the midst of all of it, there's hope in the Lord.

Look at verse 2. In that day, the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped. You know who the branch of the Lord is? The Messianic title for Jesus Christ. See, the image is repeated in Isaiah 11, in Jeremiah 23, in Jeremiah 33 and in Zechariah 3. The idea behind the title branch of the Lord is that of fullness in life, fruitfulness.

It says in those days, they'll cling to the precious promise of the Messiah more than ever. It doesn't mean that the Messiah will appear when they come back from this captivity, but it means that they'll cling to the promise of the Messiah. It says there in verse 2, the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped.

For the remnant preserved through judgment, the promise of the Messiah would be all the more beautiful, all the more dear, and all the more life-giving. Fruit would come forth from the branch of the Lord even as they simply trusted in the promise of the Messiah before He even came. What would life be like in Judah then? Not anything like it was in chapter 3. Look here at verse 3. It shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and he who remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

Isn't that marvelous? What will they be called? Holy. They shall be called holy. Can you imagine the group of people described in Isaiah chapter 3 being called holy? No! You would call them beautiful.

You'd call them delicate. You'd call them attractive. You'd call them fashionable.

You'd call them sexy. But you would not call them holy. No, God promises that when He brings back this remnant, that's what you're going to call these people.

You'll look at them and you'll call them holy. Christ's holiness will be given to them. And it will be given to everybody.

Look at it in verse 3. Everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. In the days of the branch of the Lord, the distinguishing mark of them all, including the daughters of Zion, is that they shall be called holy. What does that mean? Holy does not mean super spiritual.

I cannot be troubled with the normal details of life. I'm living the holy life. Don't ask me to take out the garbage.

I'm living the holy life. Hi brother, my name is David. According to John 3, chapter 5, and blah, blah, blah, and quoting scriptures everywhere you go.

No. Holy does not mean super spiritual. It does not mean sinless perfection.

It does not mean spiritually superior and obnoxious. It means a heart, a life, a mind, and a body that's genuinely separated unto the Lord. It's a life lived apart from the thinking and the heart of this world, this flesh and the devil.

And it's lived apart from those things and it's lived apart unto the Lord. That's what it means to be holy. Can somebody look at your life and call it holy? That's what the Lord wants.

Verse 4. Oh, this is so beautiful. When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, then

the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion and above her assemblies a cloud and a smoke by day for the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering.

There will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. Isn't it beautiful? The Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion. Wherever the branch of the Lord reigns, there will be cleansing.

That cleansing will not come easily. It will come. Notice it.

Look at verse 4. By the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning. Just like we were saying last week, right? Refiner's fire. Make me holy, pure, Lord.

Okay, he says. I will wash you. I will wash you by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.

Well, Lord, maybe I don't want to be so pure, Lord. Just kind of pure. That's enough, God.

Friends, that cleansing will not come easily. It comes by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. But it is worth it.

We read to you a very vivid quotation from an old commentator named John Trapp. You know a commentator is old when they speak very frankly and forthrightly. When they sort of mince their words and sound, you know, kind of prissy nice.

You know, that's a modern commentator. But when they say things like this, you know it's old. Sin is the excrement of the soul.

The superfluity or garbage of naughtiness. The devil's vomit. From this abominable filth, Christ hath loved us with his own blood and washed us, that he may make us kings and priests unto God in his Father.

I heard the filthiness of the soul. The Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters. God wants to wash you and purify you.

It doesn't matter. Take a look at the profile of these daughters of Zion in chapter 3 and you go, man, that's filthy. God says the branch of the Lord can cleanse it.

It can cleanse any one of us. Every one of us. But that's not all.

Wouldn't that be enough? If you just came to Jesus and he cleansed you that way, that would be worth it, wouldn't it? Just to be cleansed from your sin that way. Just to be cleansed from filthiness. That would be worth it.

But that's not all. Look at verse 5. Then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion and above her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and shining of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory there will be a covering. You see, when the branch of the Lord reigns, there will be a tangible presence of the Lord.

Isn't it beautiful? Where will it be? Everywhere. Remember in the Exodus, the children of Israel were coming out from Egypt on their way to the promised land. God gave them these symbols of his presence.

The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. And that pillar of cloud by day and fire by night led them and followed them and was with them constantly. And it was associated with the tabernacle.

And when God wanted them to move, he'd move the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. And when he wanted them to stay, he'd keep it put. Everybody knew the presence of the Lord was with them because of it.

Now what does God say? He says, I'm going to give one of those to everybody. Look at it. It says that in verse 5. The Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion and above her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night.

Isn't that exciting? You see, not only does Jesus Christ wash us, but he gives us beautiful evidence of the presence of the Lord. Friends, if you're here tonight and you want to know the presence of the Lord, but he seems a million miles away from you, you feel so distant from God, let me say one of two possible things is going on in your life. It might be that you're just being flat out ripped off by the devil and you just need to say no.

I know the Lord is there and I know he's here and I'm just not receiving it. Or it may be that the Lord has withdrawn not his presence, but the sense of his presence so that you would trust him even more. But can I make an absolute promise, an absolute guarantee to every child of God here this evening? Jesus Christ is with you.

He's there. He's present. See, I can't see the cloud or the pillar of fire.

It doesn't matter. He's there. He's there.

He said, Behold, I will be with you always, even unto the end of the age. That's a promise you can bank on. Take it to the bank.

He's with you. He's present. You don't have to fear.

You don't have to worry. He is there. So washing is promised.

His presence is promised. And then finally, there is protection promised. I guess if I was a better preacher, I would have said purifying, presence, and protection.

Because that's much more memorable. But look at verse 6. And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. Where the branch of the Lord reigns, there is protection from the presence of the Lord.

The Lord's people are safe and secure, washed, and in the abiding presence of the Lord. Do you have that sense that the Lord is protecting you? That he's watching out for you? He is. Let me tell you something that you probably didn't think of today, but I'll tell you about it right now.

Jesus prayed for you today. I mean that. I'm not just trying to say that in some spiritual, you know, goofball way.

I mean, right now in heaven, the living Lord God, Jesus Christ, he prayed for you, I'd suggest, by name today. Because he's protecting you. You say, oh man, you don't know what I went through today.

I don't think the Lord is protecting me at all today. Well, yeah, you don't know how much worse it could have been if Jesus hadn't have prayed for you. Peter went through some tough times, right? Peter went through some very tough times.

But Jesus said, Peter, Satan's asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But he said, but I've prayed for you. And when you return, strengthen my breath.

You might say, well, Jesus wasn't protecting Peter. Look at all he went through. No, no, no.

You bet Jesus was praying for Peter. If he hadn't have been praying for Peter, Peter would have been destroyed. And so you would have been.

Except Jesus Christ is praying for you. He's there to protect you. God is covering arms of love around you and over you.

And he loves you. He cares for you. He wants to wash you.

He wants to give you his presence. And he wants to give you his protection. And he wants your heart to be secure in those things.

You're crying out for those things. You'll pay hundreds and thousands of dollars for those things. You'll go to a psychiatrist so you can get free from the guilt in your mind.

You don't need that. You need to be washed. You'll fill your life with gadgets and entertainment and spend thousands of dollars on possessions and homes and cars and whatever, trying to fill that sense of presence in your life.

You don't need that. You need the presence of the Lord God in your life. And you fill your life with bank accounts and security systems and hedges and all these other things because you feel need for security and protection.

You need the protection, the covering of the Lord. It's amazing how we'll dedicate our lives in the pursuit of these things. As I said, spend all this time, all this money, all this energy, all this pain in pursuit of these things.

And Jesus Christ stands before you right now tonight and says, I have a cleansing for you. I have my presence for you. And I have my protection.

What more do we need? What more could we want? It really isn't enough. Now, the strength of my voice and the time on the clock does not permit us to do chapter five this evening. And it is our loss because it is a remarkable chapter in the book of Isaiah.

But we'll leave it for next week and come together on it. But I want to pray a special prayer tonight for everybody who needs to be washed and know the presence of the Lord and have a sense of his protection. Lord Jesus, we come before you now and we know, Lord God, we know who you are and we know who we are before you.

We ask that you forgive us for the vanity in which we've lived our lives, looking to so many things for the cleansing and the presence and the protection that only you can give. We've looked to other people. We've looked to things.

We've looked to the plans and the programs of man. Right now tonight, Lord, we turn our back on all of those things and we look to you. We come and drink of your waters freely.

I pray that you would fill the thirsty soul tonight and let us leave tonight cleansed and aware of your presence and sensing your protection in our lives. We love you, God. We lay ourselves before you tonight in Jesus' name.

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